

Tension runs high in S. Lebanon, U.S. sets conditions for improved ties

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israeli army will have to go on the offensive in South Lebanon and strike at Hizbollah to counter the upsurge in its deadly guerrilla operations, the commander of Israel's northern region warned Monday.

"The Israeli army is going to have to take the initiative in the war against Hizbollah, attack the terrorists and beat them," General Amiram Levine told military radio.

"Hizbollah is a serious adversary, which does not distinguish between civilians and soldiers in its attacks. We must fight it without mercy. We will crush it," he said.

The general was speaking as the Shiite Muslim fundamentalist group stepped up its attack in Israel's self-declared "security zone," a strip of occupied land along the border in South Lebanon.

"Hizbollah guerrillas attacked Israeli troops and their proxy militia on Monday, wounding three militiamen, the South Lebanon Army said.

Israeli troops killed four Hizbollah fighters Sunday after they attacked an army patrol, leaving one Israeli officer dead and seven other soldiers wounded.

Israeli Chief-of-Staff Ehud Barak meanwhile said the Jewish state had dealt "severe blows to terrorist organisations" in South Lebanon.

"We have killed 20 terrorists in a month," he said, adding that Israel had undergone "more difficult times, during which the terrorists had much more success."

Hizbollah last week pledged to wipe out the SLA and claimed attacks on the SLA that killed nine militiamen.

The guerrillas, who spearhead anti-Israeli attacks in the region, are staunchly opposed to Arab-Israeli peace talks and seek to liberate South Lebanon from Israeli occupation.

Meanwhile, last week's visit by a senior U.S. envoy marks a new beginning in relations that could ultimately lead to the lifting of an American travel ban on Lebanon.

But the Americans are setting stiff conditions on the Beirut government if Washington is to reconsider the restrictions, the leftist newspaper *As Safir* reported Monday.

Robert Pelletreau, assis-

tant secretary of state for Near East affairs, was the first senior U.S. official to visit Lebanon in about a year, signalling an American will to improve strained ties.

Foreign Minister Faris Bouez told the independent *An Nahar* newspaper in remarks published Monday that Mr. Pelletreau's discussions "aimed at reiterating Washington's desire to reorganise Lebanese-American relations and its readiness to discuss with authorities the issues that led to the (travel) ban."

Mr. Pelletreau, who met President Elias Hrawi and other government leaders on Friday, has said Washington wants to see ties with Beirut improve and increase.

As Safir said Mr. Pelletreau spent an extra day in Beirut on Saturday away from the spotlight to conduct fact-finding discussions with business leaders and politicians outside of government as well as top faculty at the American University of Beirut.

The newspaper, quoting unnamed political sources, said the United States wants the Beirut government to rein in the Hizbollah and hunt down and prosecute "terrorists" who kidnapped and killed more than 260 Americans in Lebanon during the 1975-90 civil war.

The United States, stung by terrorist attacks and kidnappings of its citizens in Beirut, imposed in 1987 a ban on using U.S. passports for travel to Lebanon. The State Department, saying Lebanon remains a dangerous place, renewed the travel ban Aug. 31 and the matter is up for review in February.

American restrictions also included a boycott by U.S. airline companies on flights to Beirut airport and a ban on Middle East Airlines, Lebanon's flag carrier, from flying to New York.

The travel ban was prompted by the June 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner to Beirut. The Shiite hijackers killed an American passenger during the 17-day ordeal.

Nearly 100 Westerners were kidnapped during the civil war. Suicide car-bomb attacks on two U.S. embassy buildings and a U.S. Marine Corps base in Beirut in 1983-84 killed 260 Americans.

Seventeen Americans were kidnapped between 1983 and

1987. Three of them died in captivity. The last hostage was released in December 1991.

No arrests have been made in the attacks.

Hizbollah, or party of God, was the umbrella organisation for the anti-Christian and Muslim militias were disbanded in mid-1991, but Hizbollah kept its arms under the pretext of fighting Israeli occupation forces in South Lebanon.

The government has restored law and order and has embarked on a multibillion-dollar reconstruction programme to revive Beirut's pre-war glory as the hub of commerce and entertainment in the Middle East.

Foreigners have trickled back to Beirut. About 600 Westerners had work permits in 1993 — 24 of them Americans — a far cry from the 500,000 pre-war annual visitors.

American companies were losing out to European and Asian competitors in the reconstruction boom, and a group of Lebanese-Americans who visited Beirut this fall urged an end to U.S. restrictions.

There are signs now that Washington was starting to ease its measures.

The U.S. government's Export-Import Bank resumed financing programme in Lebanon in November after freezing transactions with the Arab country during the civil war.

Mr. Pelletreau's visit and announcement that a new ambassador would be appointed soon to fill a post vacant for four months was a positive step in relations.

But President Bill Clinton's did not visit Lebanon during his recent Middle East tour.

U.S. diplomats still live in a fortified compound and venture out only in heavily armed motorcades.

Mr. Pelletreau flew in by helicopter from Cyprus to avoid landing at Beirut international airport, which is surrounded by Hizbollah strongholds. His movements in the city were shrouded in secrecy.

The measures, and the embassy's refusal to even confirm his presence in Lebanon, were a signal that the Americans are not yet ready to plunge back into Lebanon in full gear.

Japan pledges support for Middle East peace

TOKYO (AFP) — Yitzhak Rabin, making the first visit here by an Israeli prime minister, was assured Monday of Japan's continued support for the Middle East peace process and Palestinian self-rule, Japanese officials said.

Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama told Rabin that Japan would continue assistance to the Palestinians in stabilising the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, the officials said.

The two premiers met for about one hour after Rabin arrived from Oslo where he received the Nobel Peace Prize with co-winners Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Rabin thanked Japan for providing \$10 million in aid to build housing for the Palestinian police and for taking part in the peace process through multilateral working group talks, the officials said.

"Poverty is at the root of terrorism," Mr. Rabin was quoted as telling Mr. Murayama, adding that the

fight against terrorism was his biggest challenge in the peace process.

Rabin also called for the strengthening of economic and business links, the officials said.

He proposed the two countries conclude an aviation treaty and Japan help Israel's exports of farm products to Asia, the officials said.

Mr. Murayama said Japan could cooperate in building a dam in the Jordan River if concerned parties agreed to the plan, the officials said.

Speaking more generally, the Japanese premier was quoted as telling Mr. Rabin that it was "meaningful that the two countries pursue a policy dialogue with the aim of playing an active role in the international community after the cold war."

After the meeting at the Akasaka Palace state guest house, the two premiers signed an agreement to promote cooperation in science and technology.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yohsei Kono and Israeli Ambassador to Japan Amos Ganor also signed documents on cultural exchanges be-

tween the two countries.

Mr. Rabin, accompanied by his wife Leah, was scheduled to call on Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko at the Imperial Palace Tuesday. He will also meet Foreign Minister Kono and Tokuchiro Tamazawa, the state minister for defence.

On Wednesday, Rabin will hold talks with Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura before flying on to Seoul for a four-day visit to South Korea.

The Israeli premier told reporters in Jerusalem Sunday he hoped to strengthen economic ties with the Asian powerhouses.

Israel's exports to Japan have taken off since it complained about Japan's discreet adherence to the Arab boycott before the 1992 autonomy deal with the Palestinians. Japan heavily depended on the Arab World for its oil imports.

Exports to Japan — mainly cut diamonds — climbed some 20 per cent from a year earlier to \$613 million in the first eight months of 1994. Imports tumbled to \$634 million.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Emir dissolves Kuwait City council

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The emir of Kuwait has dissolved the municipal council running Kuwait City following arguments among its 16 members, officials said Monday. The council — the only one in the emirate — was "dissolved to protect the public interest, because the lack of cooperation among its members blocked its activities," said a decree issued by Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, quoted by the official news agency KUNA. Other towns in Kuwait are run by municipal centres subordinate to the Kuwait City Council. The council, set up in October 1993 with a four-year mandate, consisted of 10 directly elected members and six appointed by the government. KUNA said the six government appointees resigned recently "in protest at the lack of cooperation from the council chairman, Mohammad Al Shayan," who is close to Islamic fundamentalists. Sheikh Jaber dissolved both the municipal council and parliament in 1986 for "abusing democracy."

'Piranhas' found in Sea of Galilee

GALILEE (AFP) — Surprised fishermen netted two piranha-like flesh-eating fish with sharp teeth in the Sea of Galilee, state radio reported. The fish, of a type never seen before in the sea, have been set to Jerusalem University to be examined by experts. "They look very much like piranhas," the small, voracious fish from South American rivers, said one expert Yehoshua Arli. The mayor of Galilee, Yossi Pered, believes the 30-centimetre (12 inch) long fish may be piranhas released from a private aquarium into the sea in northern Israel.

Tourism in Israel up 10 per cent

JERUSALEM (AP) — Tourism in Israel was about 10 per cent higher this year than in 1993, the government said Sunday. A tourism ministry statement said that 1,692,100 visitors came to Israel through November. Without providing a comparable figure, it said this was about a tenth higher than January through November of last year. It added that tourism was also about 10 per cent higher in September through November than during the summer. The rise in tourism comes in the wake of two Arab-Israeli peace agreements signed in the past year, including the September 1993 Israel-PLO accord and the treaty with Jordan signed in October.

Alleged informer killed in southern Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Three Islamic militants shot dead an alleged police informer in the troubled Mallawi region of southern Egypt Sunday, police said. Salah Abdul Aziz, a farmer, was outside his home in the village of Nawal, 300 kilometres (186 miles) south of Cairo, when the gunmen opened fire from nearby sugarcane fields. The attackers, members of the outlawed Gamaa Islamiyya group, later fled. The militants had accused Mr. Abdul Aziz of informing police about their hiding places. Earlier Sunday Egyptian police shot dead an Islamic militant in a gunbattle as they tried to arrest him in the southern town of Asyut, the interior ministry said. Mohammad Sherif Al Wazzan, a student in the town of Manfalut, was "wanted for his involvement in several terrorist attacks," the ministry said. Police "forced the door of his home where he was hiding in the town of Asyut," 380 kilometres south of Cairo, it said. "He opened fire on the policemen who retaliated, killing him on the spot. They discovered a pistol near the body." The latest deaths raise to 524 the number of people killed since Muslim militants launched a campaign in March 1992 to topple the secularist government of President Hosni Mubarak.

Syria, Lebanon won't lease occupied territory

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria and Lebanon will not relinquish any of their territory held by Israel and will not lease any of that land to the Jewish state, the state-run Damascus Radio said Monday. "We affirm anew that Syria and Lebanon will not give up any of their rights or part of their land, nor will they offer their land for lease and their rights to auction," the radio said in a commentary. The broadcast appeared to be aimed at staking out Damascus' position in advance of a new round of contacts between Syria and Israel in Washington sometime soon, ending a 10-month deadlock in their peace negotiations.

Drugs millionaire warns of bleak future for Bekaa

BEKAA VALLEY, Lebanon (AFP) — A diamond-studded gold Rolex watch is the first indication that Hussein, 70, is no ordinary Lebanese farmer, but one of the few who amassed a fortune by cultivating drugs in the Bekaa Valley.

He retired from the business with at least \$100 million to his name, and now states in all seriousness that "drugs are bad for you." Cautiously he declines to give his real name.

In 1943, when Lebanon gained independence from France, Mr. Hussein bought arms from the French army and sold them in his native Bekaa village in eastern Lebanon.

During the next half century he cultivated cannabis from which hashish is derived and opium poppies. His farm is a modest breeze-block building surrounded by 60 hectares (148 acres) of windswept fields.

"He also owns a magnificent home in his native village," whispers a relative.

Around 15 men, women

and children huddle in a small room around an oil-burner to keep warm as Mr. Hussein, wearing a flowing galabiyah and checkered headscarf sits like a king to tell his story.

It begins with complaints. Potato seeds imported from Belgium cost too much, the price of a litre of milk is falling and the government is doing nothing to help farmers.

He also blasts the international community for promising to help farmers to find alternative crops to cannabis and opium poppies "but not doing much."

After a few drinks the complaints fade away. Mr. Hussein speaks of the property he owns in several parts of Lebanon and a million-dollar construction project in Beirut from which he hopes to secure six million dollars.

Such a success story is rare in the Bekaa, where for most small farmers who chose to cultivate cannabis and opium poppies instead of tomatoes out of sheer necessity "life now is hard, very hard," Mr. Hussein

says. "We went too quickly from riding donkeys to driving a Mercedes 500," he says.

Three years ago with Syria's help Lebanon eradicated hashish and poppy fields in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa but experts say small-time trafficking and opium laboratories still exist.

Hashish fields could reappear in the Bekaa if the government and the international community fail to provide farmers with alternative cash crops, Mr. Hussein warns.

People will wait a short while and then start planting hashish again. "They have the seeds," he says.

The warning was echoed by Sultan Haydar, the government representative to the U.N. rural development programme for the Baalbek and Hermel regions in the Bekaa.

"People here have nothing to lose, there is a real danger that hashish cultivation will start again," Mr. Haydar said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Un Pour Tous
17:30 Embarquement Pour 1
18:30 Les Intrepides
19:00 News in French
19:30 F.B.I. The Untold Stories
20:00 World Echo
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Cracking The Code
22:00 News in English
22:30 First Circle
23:10 Fly By Night

PRAYER TIMES

04:59 Fajr
06:12 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:29 Dhuhr
14:14 'Asr
16:37 Maghreb
18:00 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623441

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel.
628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
824328
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

There will be a chance for showers
in the northern and central
parts of the Kingdom with winds
southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba,
winds will be northerly moderate
and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 3/12
Amman 7/19
Dera'a 0/14
Jordan Valley 5/17

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 12, Aqaba 18, Humidity

readings: Amman 49 per cent,
Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Farouq Nour 786680
Dr. Ratiq Zaitoun 888685
Dr. Jihad Zaidieh 881148
Fire pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asana pharmacy 637053
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Khalil 273099
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Youssef Hazzallah 988075
Khilfeh pharmacy 983417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power
Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann. 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Ann. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642562
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 64171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musheir Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/51
Al-Abli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26
Army, Marka 891611/5
Queen Alia Hospital 686100
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)273555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Jbn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia In-
ternational Airport Tel. (08)53200.
5, where it should always be ver-
ified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
(Terminal 1)
04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Aqaba (RJ)
09:55 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
18:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:35 London (RJ)

16:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
16:50 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:30 Vienna (OS)
17:05 Rome (AZ)
20:00 Aden (Y)
20:30 Beirut (ME)
23:30 Amsterdam (KL)
23:50 Bucharest (RO)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights

(Terminal 1)

07:00 Aqaba (RJ)
08:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:35 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
11:55 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 Casablanca (add) (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:05 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 Damascus, Paris (AF)
10:15 Larnaca, Rome (AZ)
13:50 Vienna (OS)
18:05 Damascus (AZ)
21:00 Aden (Y)

08:20 Amsterdam (KL)
09:50 Bucharest (RO)

HIAZ RAILWAY

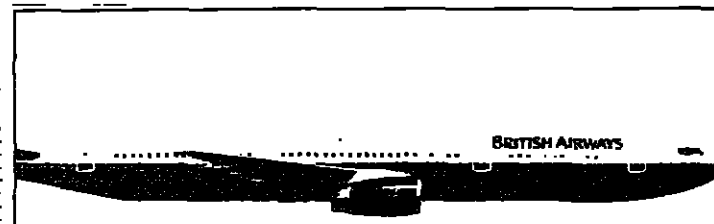
TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 8:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/400
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 160/100
Carrot 270/170
Cauliflower 340/200
Clamantine 270/170
Cucumbers (large) 350/200
Cucumbers (small) 600/400
Eggplant 550/400
Garlic 320/180
Grape Fruit 320/180
Lemon 260/180
Marrow (large) 200/120
Marrow (small) 400/200
Onion (green) 300/200
Onion (dry) 420/300
Orange 500/400
Pepper (hot) 400/300
Pepper (sweet) 400/300
Potato 320/200
Radish 250/180
Spinach 280/180
String Beans 900/700
Tomato 470/380



Kuwait City council

The council of Kuwait City has elected its 10 members, officials said. The only one in the council was the public interest, because the lack of public interest in the council was the only one in the council. The council was elected by the government. The council was elected by the government. The council was elected by the government.

in Sea of Galilee

Supposed fishermen netted two fish with sharp teeth in the sea of Galilee. The fish, of a type never seen before, were about 10 centimeters long. They were found in the sea of Galilee. They were found in the sea of Galilee. They were found in the sea of Galilee.

up 10 per cent

Tourism in Israel was about 10 per cent higher in 1993, the government said. The increase was due to a number of factors. The increase was due to a number of factors. The increase was due to a number of factors.

in southern Egypt

Free Islamic militants shot dead an Israeli soldier in the southern town of Asut. The soldier was killed by a bullet. The soldier was killed by a bullet. The soldier was killed by a bullet.

not lease occupied territory

Syria and Lebanon will not release occupied territory, the UN said. The UN said that the release of occupied territory was not in the interests of the people. The UN said that the release of occupied territory was not in the interests of the people.

300 university students protest opening of Israeli embassy

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Students at the University of Jordan Monday staged a demonstration to protest the opening of the first Israeli embassy in the Kingdom.



Students at the University of Jordan Monday set a home-made Israeli flag afire (photo by Rana Hussein).

Raising placards and black flags, more than 300 students chanted slogans and held banners condemning the peace process, normalisation with Israel and the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. Some banners read: "Another manifestation of Zionist invasion which will be rejected by our people."

During the half-hour protest, students shouted "No to the embassy, no to normalisation." A group of male students burned two Israeli flags at the end of the protest.

The student union informed us that they were staging a protest," Mohammad Khreisat, dean of student affairs at the university told the Jordan Times.

"They (the students) are free to express their point of view," Dr. Khreisat said. Jordan and Israel Sunday formally opened embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv two weeks after establishing diplomatic relations ending 46 years of war between the two countries with the signing of the Oct. 26 peace treaty.

The peaceful demonstration, which was organised by the Student Union, came one day after the opening of the Israeli embassy, temporarily housed in a six-room suite of the Forte Grand Hotel, and weeks after His Majesty King Hussein warned the opposition not to pursue active opposition to the Kingdom's peace treaty with Israel.

Hussein warned the opposition not to pursue active opposition to the Kingdom's peace treaty with Israel. The protesters described the day as a "black day in the history of our nation."

On Oct. 26, more than 3,000 university students marched in support of the peace treaty chanting slogans in support of King Hussein's policies and reaffirming their allegiance to the Hashemite Throne.

Jordanian, Japanese officials study tourism development

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Japanese delegation which arrived in Jordan recently to prepare a comprehensive study on tourism development in the Kingdom to the year 2010, Monday met with Jordanian officials who will be working with them on the implementation of the study.

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The Jordanian team includes officials from various governmental agencies headed by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Minister of Tourism Mohammad Adwan headed the two teams' first meeting Monday morning.

Dr. Adwan extended the appreciation of the Jordanian government to the government of Japan and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for undertaking this study which

comes at a time when Jordan is witnessing a turning point in history, especially for the tourism sector, a ministry spokesperson said. "Your task is not easy, and it is highly important since this study is a very long term one," Dr. Adwan said.

"Tourism is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities alone, it is also the responsibility of all the ministries, Jordanians and the non-governmental organisations," Dr. Adwan added.

The minister also recommended that the teams include the participation of the private sector.

The head of the Japanese delegation presented a preliminary report and briefed the attendees on the scope of the study, saying "there

are two phases of the study. "Phase one will cover the entire Kingdom, and phase two, will provisionally cover the priority zones from Amman to Aqaba along the King's Highway, including the Dead Sea area, Wadi Araba to the west and along the Desert Highway to Wadi Rum and Mudawara at the Saudi Arabia border to the east."

It was decided at the meeting to form a committee from the private sector to work with the Japanese team and benefit from its experiences in the field of tourism development.

The team will conduct field studies until February 1995, and the overall study is expected to be completed by March 1996.

Ministry plans to build 57 new schools

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education Monday unveiled a plan for the construction of 57 schools in the Kingdom during 1995 at the overall cost of JD41 million.

Director of the ministry's school projects, Yahya Kasbi, told a press conference Monday that designs for these schools have been prepared and the funds required have been allocated in the 1995 fiscal budget.

The plan also entails adding 625 classrooms to 143 existing schools and installing teaching equipment and laboratories as well as vocational training tools in 62 others, said Mr. Kasbi.

Next year the ministry plans to establish teachers' clubs in Jerash, Ajloun, Madaba, Karak, Zarqa, Balqa and Ma'an, and create 17 education departments and build six housing units for teachers in remote regions, Mr. Kasbi added.

He said JD3 million has been earmarked for school maintenance and an agreement was recently concluded with the World Bank to lend the ministry \$18.5 million to conduct maintenance works on another 100 schools.

Referring to school furniture, the official said the ministry has already announced tenders worth \$22 million to furnish 14 secondary schools and 88 primary schools.

Minister inaugurates Al Nadim hospital

MADABA (Petra) — Health Minister Aref Batayneh Monday formally inaugurated the 84-bed Al Nadim hospital in Madaba which the ministry purchased from the private sector for JD 2.2 million and announced that the old government hospital in the city will be converted into a comprehensive health clinic.

All the 30 government-employed specialists and nine general practitioners have been transferred to Al Nadim Hospital in addition to the nursing staff, said the minister in a ceremony held at the new hospital.

According to Jaafar Huneidi, Al Nadim Hospital director, the old government hospital will soon be enlarged to include a forensic unit, a dialysis unit, out-patient clinics, a nursing school, a nurses' residential quarter and a health ministry office.

Noting that the old hospital had only 70 beds, Dr. Huneidi said that the new hospital was expected to accommodate the needs of the entire Madaba district for the time being. But, he added that Al Nadim Hospital could be enlarged vertically in the future depending on the level of demand for medical services.

Madaba Governor Abdul Qader Hababeh, who accompanied the minister on a tour of the premises, said that the new hospital would offer better medical services to the Madaba region.

Documents finalised for \$110m loan to fund power station expansion

AMMAN (J.T.) — Documents have been finalised for the conclusion of an agreement for a \$100 million loan from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) to conduct the second phase of an expansion project at the Aqaba Thermal Power Station, Minister of Planning Hisham Khatib announced Monday.

AFESD has approved the soft low-interest loan which will be used to finance the purchase and installation of two 130-megawatt thermal generating units, and to expand two transformer stations, one at Aqaba and another near Amman, said the minister.

Mr. Khatib said that between 1993 and 1994 the fund has provided Jordan with JD \$206.5 million, part of which is being used to finance the construction of the King Abdullah Hospital near Irbid and part to finance the construction of the Karameh Dam.

The Aqaba Thermal Power Station already has two similar units which went into operation in 1987.

The station was visited Monday by delegates to the Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian-Israeli committee currently meeting at the port city to discuss electric power linkages between the four parties.

The energy officials and experts, who are joined by representatives from Germany, Austria and the European Union (EU), are reviewing a feasibility study on the link-up project prepared by German and Austrian experts with financing from the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Speaking after the initial meeting Monday, Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) Director General Mohammad Arafah said that the four-state power link-up would not affect plans for linking the national grids of Egypt and Jordan, a project which would later involve Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

The experts are scheduled to meet again Tuesday, he said, to review working papers on the proposed four-party link-up project.

Hammad describes new operating procedures of ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Salamah Hammad Monday briefed the press on the ministry's plans for administrative divisions and new operating procedures.



Minister of Interior Salamah Hammad Monday holds a press conference at the new ministry premises (Petra photo).

Speaking at the ministry's new premises located near the Royal Cultural Centre, Mr. Hammad said the ministry's plans are designed to promote the role of and give more power to local governors and prevent work duplication.

New technological methods are being adopted in linking various governorates with the ministry in Amman through a computerised network that can provide accurate information to decision makers, said the minister.

Mr. Hammad accompanied the journalists on a tour of the premises including the main operations room, which is equipped with modern communications systems, and briefed them on new procedures aimed at speeding up

routine formalities which involve the public. Present at the meeting were ministry Secretary General Khalil Khreisat and other senior officials.

Seminar explains benefits of ISO certification

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times



AMMAN — A seminar on the implementation of International Standards Organisation's (ISO) specifications aimed at explaining to Jordanian businessmen the advantages their products would enjoy if awarded the ISO 9000 certificate.

The ISO 9000 is awarded by the Geneva-based International Standards Organisation, the representative body for a series of quality system standards that are adopted by more than 91 countries worldwide, according to Tafari Abu Ghazaleh International (TAGI), a private accounting and auditing firm. These countries are using ISO standards as their quality assurance mechanisms for products and services that are traded within their markets, a TAGI study said.

Hazim Shahin of Team International told the Jordan Times that the adopting of ISO 9000 by Jordanian companies would benefit the Kingdom's export promotion strategies and would bring company performance in line with internationally accepted standards.

Arun Walvekar, also of

Team International, addressed the seminar participants, explaining the advantage of ISO 9000 implementation and saying that it has become necessary for Jordanian products to bear the certificate if those products are to compete effectively in an ever-growing export market.

According to Team International, governments worldwide are increasingly relying on suppliers' quality systems' conformance to ISO 9000 requirements. ISO agencies granting the certificate, as independent third parties to the client-customer relationship, provide confidence in the quality of the products, services and processes involved, officials at Team International said.

According to TAGI, the benefits of implementing the ISO 9000 standards include being awarded an international seal of approval, competitive distinction domestically and internationally, developing powerful international market penetration strategies, operating cost reductions, and increased employee productivity.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

CONCERT

★ Concert of Russian songs by Valentina Mustafa at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

★ Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "The Crisis of Human Rights Organisations in Jordan" by Mr. Salehman Sweis at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00

FILM

★ Palestinian film entitled "Until Further Notice" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:30 p.m.

NEWS

★ ABC News Highlights and McNeill-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Painting and water colours exhibition by Suhail Ma'touq at Baladna Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of home furnishings and furniture entitled "Colours and Crafts" at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development new offices, Al Madina Al Munawara Street.

★ Exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artist at Darat Al

FUNDS

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Salman Abbas at Alia Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of abstract art by several artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Ismail and Tamam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Sadik Kwaish at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by Akram Naji Shaker at Ab'sad Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition by artists Lattif Al Khateeb and Muhy Khaleefa at the Housing Bank Gallery.



Delors pullout signals cut-throat election battle on French right

PARIS (AFP) — France headed Monday for a cut-throat presidential election campaign after Socialist Jacques Delors' decision not to run left the field open for a plethora of conservative and anti-European candidates.

The decision by Mr. Delors, the outgoing president of the European Commission, revived the hopes of Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac and sowed for a bitter struggle on the right with Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, in the race to replace Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

But Mr. Delors' move, virtually guaranteeing a right-wing candidate will be elected to the Elysee Palace next May, risked spawning a host of rival candidates who would have been deterred from standing for fear of splitting the conservative vote.

Mr. Delors, seen as the only electable Socialist candidate to replace President Francois Mitterrand, left Mr. Balladur best-placed in opinion polls, but maybe not for long.

The prime minister's over-exposure, perceived lack of dynamism and stuffy image, could wear down his poll lead, analysts said, as Mr. Chirac mounts a counter-offensive.

Mr. Balladur must retain the support of pro-European centrist elements in his parliamentary majority, but in eight successive opinion polls Mr. Delors had won backing from that electorate and overtaken the prime minister.

Noted moderate and pro-European Raymond Barre, a former prime minister, has left open the possibility of a

candidacy and could be tempted to try to inherit the Delors mantle.

Significantly, Mr. Barre had a 45-minute interview with Mr. Mitterrand last Thursday, shortly after saying he had not yet ruled out a candidacy.

Another challenge to Mr. Balladur is being brandished by the centrist Charles Millon, head of the UDF (Union for French Democracy) group in the National Assembly.

Mr. Millon has threatened to run on the UDF label while a key element of the Balladur strategy has been to persuade the UDF to rally behind him and not put up its own candidate. Like Mr. Chirac, Mr. Balladur is a member of the neo-Gaullist Rally For the Republic (RPR).

The temptation to run might also be felt by anti-Europeans Charles Pasqua, the interior minister, and National Assembly speaker Philippe Seguin, flanked by such fringe candidates as radical anti-European Philippe De Villiers and far-right National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

On the left, there are several potential candidates — including former Culture Minister Jack Lang and former Premier Michel Rocard and Pierre Mauroy — but none is likely to win enough support to present a serious threat in the elections, due in April and May.

With the election, a two-year period of power-sharing, or "cohabitation," between left and right that began last March when the Socialists were routed in legislative elections, will come to an end.

Mr. Delors said the fact that a leftwing president would have to cohabit with a centre-right government had influenced his decision.

"Frankly, I would not like to have been elected to cohabit with a government that did not share my views. I would feel that I had lied to the French people by proposing plans for France that could not be put into practice."

Reaction to Mr. Delors' decision not to run for French president ranged from shock to admiration Monday, with Euro-sceptics relieved that he will not be pushing his federalist ideas from the Elysee.

The money-markets, which have made no secret of their admiration for "Mr. Europe," were clearly disappointed with the decision, the French franc slipping as soon as trading opened Monday morning.

In front-page comments across Europe printed hours after Mr. Delors bowed out of the presidential race live on television Sunday night, commentators after commentators called the decision a brave and realistic one.

"Delors spurs ambition to avoid polarising France," ran the headline in Britain's Independent. "Know thyself" should be the first rule in politics," it commented.

"There are very few people capable of observing it in a business driven by ambition and ideology and the pursuit of power. Yesterday, Jacques Delors showed that he understood it."

In Switzerland and Spain he was praised for his "political honesty," while the Danish daily Information lamented that "the flame of hope... in the Socialist camp

has been definitively snuffed out."

Germany's General Anzeiger said simply: "For the first time, a politician who has triumphed over all his adversaries in the opinion polls has not allowed himself to be influenced by the trend," praising Mr. Delors as "a prudent man."

Euro-sceptics were relieved by the decision, although commentators pointed out that this could be a false benefit for some who liked to demonise Mr. Delors for their own political arguments.

"He realised that his candidature would inflame the debate on Europe in France, already as polarised and polemical as in Britain," said the Daily Telegraph in Britain, calling him the Euro-sceptics' "Beelzebub of Brussels."

But it said: "M. Delors was always of enormous assistance to their cause since the simplicity of his ideas and the passion in which he explained them gave them a comprehensible enemy."

Meanwhile money market reaction was dominated by a slip in the French franc in early trading Monday in response to Delors' decision. The franc fell to 3.44 to the mark, before rising again slightly later in the morning.

Against the dollar, the franc dropped a centime to 5.4288 francs for one dollar from 5.4188 Friday. "Its weakness is essentially due to Jacques Delors' announcement," said David Coleman, analyst at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. "Political uncertainty continues in France and the market is uneasy," he said.

Kinkel wins vote as FDP leader

GERA, Germany (R) — Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel won a vote of confidence as leader of Germany's Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) Monday, facing down critics who blamed him for the party's dismal election results over the past year.

Stung by abuse from within the party's own ranks, Mr. Kinkel demanded and won the vote of confidence at a special congress called to try to win back lost voters after a string of electoral losses.

Delegates backed Mr. Kinkel in a secret ballot by 390 votes to 185 with 24 abstentions, a result he termed "honourable and acceptable."

"Thank you for your trust," he said. "I will do everything in my power to get better election results and to ensure the FDP will have a better future."

Mr. Kinkel had been booed and jeered Sunday as he opened the Congress, prompting him to consider resigning as leader of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's junior coalition partners, party sources said.

In his speech Sunday, which was received with stony silence interspersed

with jeers from hecklers, Kinkel had called for the party to renew its liberal ideals.

"Yesterday was bitter," a wounded Kinkel told delegates before the vote, which did not affect his position as foreign minister.

"I want to know if I have your trust and to what extent and if I should remain at the helm of the FDP," he added.

The FDP has suffered nine devastating regional election losses in a row.

It plunged to 6.9 per cent of the vote in the October general election from 11 per cent in 1990, leaving Mr. Kohl's coalition in office by the skin of its teeth with a tiny 10-seat majority in parliament.

Many FDP members have blamed Mr. Kinkel for the party's collapse in both support and morale.

Some, especially among the grass roots, have called for ministers to be barred from holding parliamentary seats, arguing that Mr. Kinkel does not have enough energy to devote to the FDP's rebirth while juggling around as foreign minister.

Mr. Kinkel fought back by pointing out the FDP's poli-

tical woes had coincided with the crisis in Bosnia and Germany's six-month presidency of the European Union, events which posed huge demands on him as foreign minister.

His work load should start to ease next year, he said, allowing him to devote more time to reviving the FDP.

"The situation is as difficult as the party has ever faced, but I will not run away," Mr. Kinkel told the delegates.

Coalition officials played down the impact of internal FDP turmoil on the federal government.

"This is a process that concerns the FDP and its future development, but I believe the good atmosphere we have in the coalition... will not be endangered," Peter Hintze, general secretary of Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats, said in a radio interview.

But the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) said the FDP congress showed the liberals had lost their identity.

The Free Democrats are sinking in their own lack of profile and their inability to reform," SPD spokeswoman Dagmar Wiebusch said.

Taj glows in artificial moon light

NEW DELHI (AP) — A romantic moonlight view of the Taj Mahal will be possible year-round after engineers rigged up incandescent spotlights, a newspaper reported Monday. Special lights, timers and filters were used to block ultraviolet rays that archaeologists feared could harm the white marble of the 17th-century monument of love.

The lights duplicate the movement of the moon across the sky from dusk to dawn, the Times of India newspaper reported. The monument will soon be opened to tourists all night long. The Taj was closed at night some years ago following fears of attacks by separatists fighting for independence of the northwestern state of Punjab. It was reopened last year.

More women, young among U.K. homeless

LONDON (R) — Britain is experiencing a new homelessness crisis with more women and younger people sleeping rough on the streets and in shelters, a charity said Monday.

Centrepoint, a charity for the homeless, said that 43 per cent of those staying in its shelters were young women, compared with 26 per cent seven years ago. The number of 16 and 17-year-olds had jumped by 38 per cent, it said.

"We are seeing the emergence of a new homeless crisis. It may be convenient for many to believe in the myth of feckless youngsters wilfully leaving home and coming to London to look for a good time," said Nick Hardwick, chief executive of Centrepoint.

"The truth is that these youngsters — barely out of childhood — have no homes to return to, no income and very little chance of finding work," he added. A survey by six charities of 1,500 homeless people under 25 showed that 44 per cent were from ethnic minorities and most of the new homeless were forced to leave home. In 1982, 52 per cent of homeless claimed they left home to find work and to strike out on their own and 44 per cent said they were forced to leave. But recently up to 86 per cent said they had no choice but to go.

Nothing sweet about birds' call of nature

ROME (AP) — There's plenty of "white stuff" in Rome this holiday season — but it's not making anyone feel festive. Thousands of birds taking roost near the Vatican have blanketed blocks with snow-white guano and turned the area into a showdown between human ingenuity and birds' natural urges. The birds are winning. Cars are speckled within minutes. Many residents have begun totting umbrellas as protection. Others improvise. "I don't read the sports section so I use it to shield my head," said Patricia Luca, sheltered under the morning edition as she waited for a tram. The slop of droppings reached the crisis point earlier this week after a rain storm. Dozens of cyclists lost control in the slush. Merchants complained even loyal customers were heading elsewhere. The city closed off the worst area — a main thoroughfare and several adjacent streets — and street scrubbers went to work. Bird experts were called in. Their mission: Flock removal. They tried rattling them with loudspeakers and tapes of rifle blasts. They then moved on to sounds mimicking a bird distress cry. The birds — mostly palm-sized starlings — were unfazed. "We're looking at the possibility of chasing away the starlings with ultrasound," said the city's animal division chief, Bruno Cignini. Forget the gentle approach, some demand — bring in the chain saws. "Cut down the trees. It's better to kill them than the people," said Adele Calceolari, a shop owner. Some residents have taken clubs and pounds the tree trunks to try to unsettle the birds. It helped work out frustrations, but little else was accomplished. Starlings and Romans usually coexist without problem. The birds' tight formation in flight — zig-zagging over the rooftops — is as much part of the urban landscape as piazzas and outdoor cafes. The fall-out reaches its peak in the late afternoon after the birds return from feeding in the countryside. "From five to seven it's almost impossible to go out without getting hit," said Carlo Artigiani.

China arrests 1, investigates 2 in cinema fire

BEIJING (R) — Chinese public security officials have arrested the deputy director of a cinema where 325 people, including 288 children, were killed last week in China's deadliest fire in 15 years, officials said Monday.

Abulaci Cade, a member of the local Muslim Uighur minority, was arrested on orders from the local procurator late Sunday, an official of the Propaganda Department in the remote oil town of Karamay said by telephone.

He did not say what charges the man had been arrested.

Sun Yung, director of the city's cultural centre, and the town's director of education, Zhao Zhongcheng, have been detained for questioning, local officials said.

The death toll from the fire that engulfed the Friendship Hall last Thursday has risen to 325, officials said. The cinema was packed with 796 people, mostly children performing and watching a cultural show for a visiting 25-member illiterate inspection team.

The youngest victim was eight years old. Hundreds of doctors and burn specialists from across China have flown to Karamay, about 300 kilometres northwest of the Xinjiang provincial capital of Urumqi, to help treat the injured, another official said.

About 130 were injured, with 72 in critical condition, the legal Daily newspaper said. Hospitals have reported 225 hurt, with at least 11 unlikely to survive because of the severity of their burns.

"Most of the children have come out of shock, but they are now in the stage when they are most prone to infection," one official said. "If they can pass this stage then most will live."

Many citizens of the town of 220,000 had taken blood tests in case blood donations were needed, he said.

About 80 per cent of the victims have been buried with the rest of the funerals expected to be completed Tuesday.

The tiny casualties — most of them born under China's strict "one-child" policy — were buried in cemeteries at the foot of the town's Genhis Khan Hill, the official said.

"People are now waiting for the results of the investigation," he said.

Clinton disappointed by Russia

MIAMI (R) — President Bill Clinton Sunday expressed disappointment that Moscow reneged on formally signing up for NATO's "Partnership for Peace" programme but defended his policy of engagement with Russia, stressing "it is still a democracy."

At a news conference ending the 34-nation Summit of the Americas here, Mr. Clinton tried to put the best face on the increasingly troubled U.S.-Russia relationship that only a few months ago he hailed as "at last, remarkably, a normal one."

"There will always be some areas of difference between us. There will be sometimes a

greater or lesser difficulty," Mr. Clinton said of U.S.-Russian ties that are now in a rocky period.

Mr. Clinton added: "These things are to be expected in the relationships of great nations that have a lot of iron in the fire. I'll watch them. I'll work on them. I'll do whatever is necessary to protect our interests."

He also said that while he has not spoken to Russian President Boris Yeltsin directly in recent days, their aides have discussed Moscow's efforts to contain a separatist movement in the strategically important Muslim region of Chechnya.

Another disaster looms for Major in by-election

BRIERLEY HILL, England (R) — British Prime Minister John Major looked set for another painful week as two opinion polls suggested his Conservative Party would be trounced in a parliamentary by-election next Thursday.

The polls in the English midlands constituency of Dudley West put the opposition Labour Party vote at 63 to 65 per cent against 23 per cent at best for the Conservatives, who had a majority of 5,789 in the 1992 election.

Political analyst Chris Game of Birmingham University said the by-election had wide implications for the Conservatives, who have governed Britain for 15 years.

"I think it is a very significant seat because it has a middle England profile with lots of skilled workers — the sort Labour need to win back," he said.

Dudley is in the industrial heartland of Britain but the constituency, which excludes Dudley town, is not typical of the area. Twice as many people work in services as manufacturing, and market towns to the west have expensive property.

The Conservatives have lost two local council seats to Labour recently in middle-class areas. Conservative by-election posters are conspicuous by their absence.

As serious campaigning for the parliamentary seat began at the end of November, the Conservatives were tearing themselves apart over providing extra money for the European Union budget. The measure was a cabinet threat, in a so-called suicide pact, to call an election if it was beaten.

Then, with Labour activists hardly believing their luck, the government was forced to scrap an unpopular increase

in value-added tax (VAT) on home fuel, raise interest rates and put up the duty on alcohol, cigarettes and petrol.

One Labour official took pity on Dudley West's Conservative candidate Graham Postles.

"The cabinet's got a suicide pact and their candidate's been sent on a suicide mission," he said.

Mr. Postles has repeated the government line that the rate rise was necessary to ensure sustainable growth and job creation and said he was sure that message would hit home.

Voters took a different view, judging by the opinion surveys. But Labour was guarded in its reaction.

"We're obviously encouraged but bitter experience, in 1992 especially, teaches us not to put too much faith in opinion polls," said Fraser Kemp, agent of Dudley West's Labour candidate Ian Pearson.

Most opinion polls predicted, incorrectly, that Labour would win the 1992 general election. The local Express and Star newspapers said the writing was on the wall for the Conservatives because they had betrayed working-class people who embraced the middle-class values of Margaret Thatcher, Mr. Major's predecessor, in the 1980s.

"Many, many families have discovered that being middle class is no defence against losing your job or being turned out of your home," the normally pro-Conservative paper said.

"They have watched in seething anger as the hospital trust managers, the water company bosses, the non-producing city money-jugglers and all the other darlings of divisive 90s-style Toryism (Conservatism), have grown rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

Tokyo, Manila probe mid-air explosion

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese and Philippine officials launched a joint investigation Monday into the mid-air explosion aboard a Philippine Airlines (PAL) Jumbo Jet with suspicion growing that a bomb was placed on the aircraft.

"We can't specify the cause of the explosion at this moment, but it is likely that an explosive material, possibly a bomb, was placed in the plane," a Japanese Transport Ministry investigator told AFP.

One passenger was killed and six others were injured in the explosion, which occurred Sunday on the Boeing 747-200 flight carrying 273 passengers and 20 crew from Manila to Tokyo via the central Philippine island of Cebu.

"The investigation is expected to last a long time," another Japanese official said.

U.S., Vietnam settle property claims

HANOI (R) — The United States and Vietnam have reached agreement on the fate of U.S. government properties seized when Communist forces won the Vietnam War nearly 20 years ago, U.S. officials said Monday.

The agreement, initiated in Hanoi last Friday, includes the former U.S. embassy in Ho Chi Minh City from whose roof helicopters lifted Americans and Vietnamese in a last-minute evacuation during the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

The deal is expected to be signed by top officials next month clearing the way for the two former enemies to open diplomatic liaison offices in each other's capitals, the officials said.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said the two sides were aiming to open the offices by the end of this year, a target set by the Hanoi government months ago.

U.S. and Vietnamese negotiators settled diplomatic property issues in several rounds of talks after President Bill Clinton lifted a U.S. economic embargo on Hanoi last February and the two governments agreed in May to open liaison offices as a step towards full relations.

"It was the culmination of steady progress that had gone on behind the scenes, on diplomatic properties, private claims and other issues as well," a senior U.S. official said. "It's been a grinding, step-by-step process."

The agreement does not include claims on seized commercial properties worth \$230 million — mostly oil company offices — or blocked financial assets including \$350 million belonging to the fallen Saigon government held in U.S. banks.

But sources close to the talks said the issues had been discussed alongside the diplomatic property questions, and agreements were expected shortly.

Officials said the accord on official properties covered 36 U.S. official buildings on 22 sites — all but three of them in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, and including the former U.S. embassy which is now occupied by a state oil company.

Patten smoothes over Sino-British dispute

SEOUL (AFP) — Visiting Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten Monday smoothed over Britain's disputes with China, touting the colony's future as a continued magnet for foreign investment after it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997.

In a speech here before local businessmen, Mr. Patten said China, in its own interest, would honour the 1984 bilateral Joint Declaration, which provides that Hong Kong's way of life will continue for 50 years beyond 1997.

"If the Joint Declaration is implemented, as I hope and believe it will be, Hong Kong after 1997 will continue to flourish and its success tomorrow will be based in the same rule of law, the same rights and liberties that are the foundations of its prosperity today," he said.

Mr. Patten arrived here Sunday on a three-day official visit as the first Hong Kong governor to call on South Korea. On Monday, he visited the National Assembly, met with business leaders and with Foreign Minister Han Sung-Joo.

Mr. Patten said Hong Kong had the "odd disagreement" with China, including differences over legislative elections, but added: "Transferring sovereignty has never, historically, been

an easy business."

The governor defended his package of political reforms, which have been manied by China. Under them, most of the colony's Legislative Council will be directly elected by the public next year.

"Fair and open elections" offering a "genuine choice" were important, so that a cleanly-elected assembly would emerge, creating laws that would be fairly enforced by the courts and command respect in the community and among overseas investors.

"I am also at a loss to understand how it would have promoted stability if we had tried to lock the popular, democratically elected politicians in Hong Kong out of the political process," he said. "That way would have lain bitter argument and unrest."

Mr. Patten also warned that if the Hong Kong Airport project is delayed or its port activities constrained, it would directly hurt Hong Kong and China, not Britain itself.

"Increasingly as the months go by and 1997 draws closer, people will look to China, for answers and to China for reassurance about life after 1997," he said.

"The more China provides those answers and that reassurance, the greater confidence will be in Hong Kong, the more Hong Kong will prosper and thrive, and so too will China," he said.

At the weekend, China's top official for Hong Kong affairs, Lu Ping, announced that after scrapping the Hong Kong legislature following the July 1, 1997 handover, Beijing would set up a temporary assembly to run the territory, as Britain had "foiled" a smooth transition of sovereignty.

Mr. Lu also said there was no guarantee that all judges on a planned Court of Final Appeal — seen by Britain as Hong Kong's prime legal bulwark after 1997 — would be allowed to remain on the panel after the takeover.

Those proposals drew a sharp reaction in Hong Kong, where pro-democracy campaigners saw it as an assault on some of the territory's political foundations.

Pro-democracy campaigners called for support for a motion that will be tabled in Hong Kong's Legislative Council this week condemning the proposals formulated by the Preliminary Working Committee (PWC) a body co-chaired by Mr. Lu to oversee transfer of sovereignty in 1997.

"We want to give a very clear signal to Beijing that what is happening cannot be good for a smooth transfer of

sovereignty," said legislator Martin Lee, head of the Democratic Party.

"They call themselves the Preliminary Working Committee. I think it is more appropriate to be called a 'Preliminary Wrecking Committee,' because whatever you propose will be wrecked," he said.

In a full-page advertisement appearing in a Chinese daily, the Hong Kong Economic Times, a group calling itself the Hong Kong Culture and Arts Group also lashed out at the idea of a temporary Beijing-appointed assembly.

The scheme is an "open attack on the basic principle that 'Hong Kong people will govern Hong Kong,'" the advertisement said, referring to a 10-year-old Chinese pledge on autonomy.

The group, comprising some 220 leading media personalities, writers and politicians called on Beijing "not to meddle in Hong Kong's internal affairs at its will."

Taj glows in artificial moon light

NEW DELHI (AP) — A romantic moonlight view of the Taj Mahal will be possible in the year 2000 after an artificial moon is launched into orbit. The moon, a small satellite, will be launched by India's space agency, ISRO, in the next few years. The satellite will be launched into orbit and will be used to provide a continuous supply of light to the Taj Mahal. The satellite will be launched into orbit and will be used to provide a continuous supply of light to the Taj Mahal.

More women, young among U.K. homeless

LONDON (AP) — Britain is experiencing a new homelessness crisis with more women and young people sleeping rough on the streets and in day centres. A survey by the charity Shelter, published on Monday, found that the number of homeless people in Britain has risen by 10 per cent since 1993. The survey also found that the number of homeless women has risen by 15 per cent and the number of young people by 20 per cent.

Nothing sweet about birds' call of nature

ROME (AP) — There's nothing sweet about the call of nature for a bird in a cage. A study by Italian scientists has found that birds in cages are more likely to die than those in the wild. The study found that birds in cages have a higher mortality rate than those in the wild. The study also found that birds in cages are more likely to be sick and have a shorter lifespan than those in the wild.



THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING: A column of Russian troops, tanks and anti-aircraft cannons heads toward the Chechnya capital. The convoy was photographed about 50 km from Grozny as at least 200 Russian armoured vehicles were reported driving quickly from the west of the breakaway republic towards the capital (AFP photo)

Northern League leader attacks Berlusconi

ROME (AFP) — Italy moved closer to a political crisis Monday when the leader of one of the parties in the governing coalition of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi attacked the government. Umberto Bossi, leader of the federalist Northern League, made the charge in his party's weekly newsletter. He said he would go ahead with a "verification" of the agreement between the coalition parties once the 1995 budget has been approved.

Ireland's Spring fends off attacks over child case

DUBLIN (R) — Irish Labour leader Dick Spring said Monday that charges he had misled the public over a child abuse case that brought down the government were an attempt to torpedo efforts to forge a new coalition. Mr. Spring issued this counter-accusation on Irish Radio shortly before he was due to resume talks with the Fine Gael and Democratic

U.S. senators call flying visit to N. Korea 'historic'

SEOUL (AFP) — Two influential U.S. senators who flew to North Korea aboard an American military aircraft for the first time since the Korean War, arrived in the South Monday, saying their 24-hour visit had been "historic". After briefing President Kim Young-Sam on the visit, Democratic Senator Paul Simon said: "We had a brief but historic visit to North Korea in the first U.S. plane to land in North Korea since 1953."

Bosnian Serbs lift blockade of U.N. fuel convoy to Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serb troops Monday lifted their blockade of a fuel convoy to allow the hard-pressed U.N. mission in Bosnia to get its first supplies of petrol and diesel for over three weeks, a U.N. spokesman said. The six-truck French convoy with 30 tonnes of fuel for the mission, whose supplies had run so low it had started cutting anti-sniper patrols and other vital operations, had been blocked at a Serb checkpoint outside Sarajevo for three days.

Fighting breaks out in Burma rebel movement

BANGKOK (AFP) — Guerrillas in the Karen rebel movement, the biggest ethnic group fighting Burma's military junta, were locked in internecine fighting around a temple in northeastern Burma Monday, according to sources said. The battles, marked by mortar and automatic arms fire, pitted Buddhists against Protestant Christians in the worst-ever crisis within the Karen National Union (KNU).

Thai government gets new lease on life

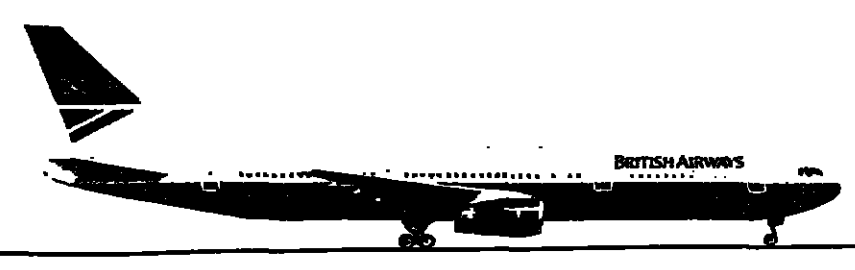
BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai managed to forestall threatened early elections when his Democrat Party announced Monday it was bringing an opposition party into the shaky coalition. "It was unlikely Mr. Chuan would serve out a full four-year term, but the new alignment, described as a marriage of convenience for all parties, would give him more time to prepare to face the voters, analysts said."

With 1996 elections in sight, Clinton suggests tax cut

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — President Bill Clinton said Sunday he hoped to fulfill a campaign pledge by proposing a tax cut next year that would be "fair to both the middle class and to the poor." Mr. Clinton said any tax cut he would endorse must help the middle classes "without hurting poor people."

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1974
جورديان تايمز مؤسسة صحفية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Peace on all fronts

THE RECENT revelation by the Public Security Directorate that crime has shot up by 50 per cent over the past five years is both shocking and unacceptable. It would be easy to explain this dramatic deterioration of law and order in the country on the basis of poverty and poverty-related factors. That there is a link between crime and economic conditions is a foregone conclusion, confirmed time and again by the experiences of many countries worldwide. This means that the most effective way to reverse the tide of crime in the Kingdom is to address the economic woes of Jordanians and put this subject on the top of the national agenda. Having attained external peace, with the signing and ratification of the peace treaty with Israel, should not blind us to the need to have and enjoy peace at home. As a matter of fact, the realisation of peace with Israel should set in motion the process of establishing peace and stability at home. The government has in effect been freed from external pressures to such an extent as to allow it to move effectively to eradicate crime from our society. Still, this priority consideration of "peace at home" cannot be attained without a dramatic improvement of the national mechanisms of law and order.

Both the police power and the administration of justice through the public prosecutor's office need to be revamped as well as bolstered materially and intellectually in order to render them effective across the board. The function of the police is a sophisticated business that calls for quality manpower. It is high time Jordanians with foreign education and exposure get recruited to stem the tide of crime. Organised crime calls for the most sophisticated technologies. The investment in law and order is therefore a pressing need and no matter how high is its price tag, we should do it as soon as possible. The country cannot prosper and develop if crime is on the rise. Now is the time to do something about this problem, before it gets out of hand.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Dustour daily Monday cast a very gloomy look at the Islamic summit opening in Casablanca Tuesday, expressing belief that no deliberations would restore solidarity among the 45-member states. The Arab countries, which form nearly half the group of Muslim countries at the meeting, are in total disarray and have been so even when the Arab League was functioning, said Taher Al Adwan. This adverse element, together with the fact that the United States is adamantly pursuing the plot to destroy the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), are bound to render the Islamic conference ineffective, said the writer. Not only would the meeting show and prove that the OIC member countries are unable to settle their disputes and agree on common action to safeguard the nation's interests, the OIC members would also discover that their meeting would fall under United States hegemony which aims at creating a new regional bloc to replace OIC and the Arab League and to embrace Israel as a member of the new regional entity.

DISCUSSING the ever-rising prices of various commodities, especially the basic foodstuff, a writer in Al Rai said that the consumers are falling between the hammer of the merchants' greed that the anvil of tax increases imposed by the government. The merchants are continually making exorbitant profits, of course, at the expense of the consumers who are the real victims because prices are on the rise all the time even if the cost of products in the country of origin declines, said Samir Habashneh. The only way to come to the help of consumers is through concerted effort on the part of the executive as well as the legislative authorities working together. Unless the Jordanian citizens feel they are protected from manipulation and greed, the country's democracy and social justice would be the object of ridicule, stressed the writer.

Bosnia crisis — malignant effect on world affairs

By G.H. Jansen

Bosnia-Herzegovina, that small, hitherto-remote and obscure country remarkable mainly for its long and unproven name, has turned out to be the anvil on which the hammer of Serbia has cracked open a whole array of international organisations. These are: the larger Western alliance, that is the alliance between Western Europe and the U.S.; the U.N., specifically as a peacekeeping organisation; the smaller Western alliance, restricted to Western Europe; NATO; and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

And all this has happened because Bosnia-Herzegovina has a large Muslim element which the Christian countries of Western Europe, specifically Britain and France, are determined should not be permitted to emerge as the first Islamic country on the continent. The larger Western alliance has split because the U.S. wants the U.N. embargo on the old Yugoslavia to be lifted for the

Bosnian area so that the Muslims can get arms to defend themselves against the attacks of the Orthodox Christian Serbs and of the Roman Catholic Croats, while the West Europeans want the embargo to be maintained so that the Muslims are crushed by their Christian neighbours and cease to be an Islamic threat.

This policy difference has produced really angry disputes between the U.S. and U.K./France with the latter telling the former: "Put up or shut up", because the U.S. resolutely refuses to commit peacekeeping American troops to Bosnia to join the British and French contingents already there which Britain and France threaten to withdraw if the Muslims are given arms. This threat to withdraw is an obvious ploy to stop the Americans arming the Muslims.

But why the Americans, generally anti-Islamic, should, on this particular issue, be pro-Muslim is something of a mystery. The idealistic reason given

by the Americans — that self-defence is a sacred principle — does not carry full conviction: a more realistic reason is probably that the U.S. doesn't want to antagonise the Muslim countries controlling its supply of oil.

The U.N., as a force for peace, is reduced to impotence because it has been pulled this way and that by the conflicting policies of the U.S., the major contributor to the U.N. budget, and of the U.K. and France, two of the five permanent members of the Security Council and with soldiers in the U.N. force in Bosnia. That the U.N. is ineffectual could also be due to the fact that U.N. representatives like Secretary General Boutros Ghali and Yasushi Akashi, the U.N. bureaucrat on the ground, are weak and indecisive when faced with the tough decisions arising from the crisis over the Bosnian Muslims.

NATO came into the Bosnian picture at the request of U.N. to act as its enforcement arm, that is for

NATO planes to bomb the Serbs into obeying U.N. resolutions, which on at least one occasion was very effective. But a fortnight ago when NATO, under pressure from the U.S., launched a bombing raid with 39 planes, the British commander of the U.N. force in Bosnia, under counter-pressure from the U.K./France ordered U.N. observers to give the NATO pilots wrong directions so that the NATO raid did so little damage that the Serbs continued the attack on the Muslims on Bihac, leaving NATO looking impotent and foolish. The NATO-U.N. rift has ended with the U.N. asking NATO not to make any more attacks on the Serbs.

The smaller Western alliance is itself divided on Bosnia with the U.K. and France, trying to protect Bosnia — along with Russia and Greece — while Italy and Spain favour a less partisan role.

It is Bosnia and the Muslim element in the crisis that have inflicted great damage to the Organisation of

the Islamic Conference because the OIC has done little or nothing to help its hard-pressed co-religionists despite their desperate appeals for aid and succour. What is even worse than their indifference is the fact that even after Muslim countries sent contingents of 3,500 troops, these troops did nothing to stop the Serbs' ethnic cleansing against the Muslims. Turkey, which is the nearest Muslim country near to Bosnia, was full of pro-Muslim bravado at OIC conference but was completely inactive on the ground. It is now trying to retrieve its besmirched image by saying that it will not pull out of Bosnia if and when the British and French troops leave. But it is left to be seen whether the Turks have enough Muslim pride and courage to desert and defy their European allies.

Typical of the Turkish position is the claim by the former Turkish commander in chief that his country had

defied the U.N. arms embargo by smuggling arms to the Bosnian Muslims but then admitted that 90 per cent of the arms fell into the hands of the Croats and so never reached the Muslims.

A consistent theme in U.S. policy on Bosnia has been: Bosnia is an European problem so it should be solved by the Europeans themselves, and by doing nothing that has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The anti-Muslim Europeans are now saying that the Bosnian civil war is now finally over and that it is too late for outsiders to do anything about the immense tragedy that is Bosnia. In other words, the Western Europeans, who actively brought about that tragedy, are, in effect, proclaiming sorrowfully: "Let us endure an hour and see injustice done." But after all the suffering and sacrifice endured by the Bosnian Muslims, they are unlikely to accept an unfair settlement. The crisis in Bosnia is by no means over and will continue to have a malignant effect on world affairs.

How long will Europe stand aloof from Algeria's war?

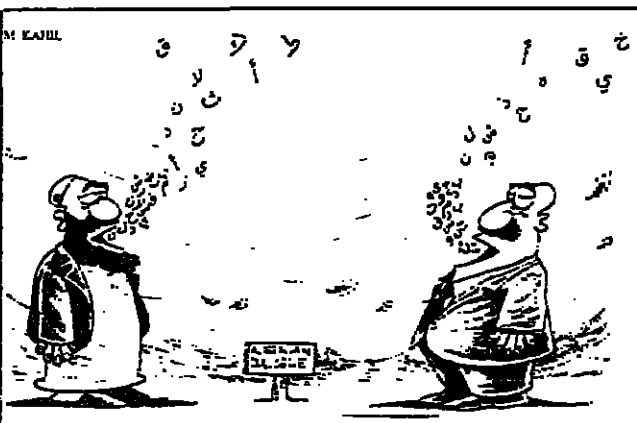
By Robert Fisk

A FEW WEEKS ago General Jacques Massu vouchsafed his advice to the embattled Algerian government of President Liamine Zeroual. "The security forces have the principal responsibility for the future of their country," the old French warrior announced. "With the West's help, their power will inevitably be successful."

That the commander of the brutal French paras who tortured their way to colonial victory in the Casbah in 1957 should be offering his counsel to the inheritors of the Algerian independence war illustrates just how far Algeria has collapsed in the past two years. How Mr. Zeroual's Islamist enemies must have cherished Gen. Massu's interference; some might call it the kiss of death.

But Gen. Massu at least caught the spirit of the times. In Algeria, it is now war to the death between the authorities and the ever-growing army of Islamists who control much of the country and, increasingly, many towns. The West's "help", such as it has been, included a few words of encouragement for Mr. Zeroual to engage in "dialogue" with the leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and a carefully preserved silence over the government's two-year-old cancellation of the democratic elections, which the FIS would have won.

Now "dialogue" has apparently failed — irretrievably, by all accounts, when the FIS leaders extracted from Bida prison to urge moderation upon their members used their government-supplied fax machines to send out a new list of targets for the killers of the Islamic guerrilla armies. What is in store for the Algerian people is a



war that may prove even more savage than the great 1954-62 struggle for independence which cost almost a million lives.

The official figure of 20,000 dead in the current conflict obscures the sheer cruelty with which many of these victims have died. Girls shot dead for refusing to wear the veil, sons beheaded because their parents are policemen, women raped to death in police dungeons, foreigners slaughtered on sight by Islamists. When the most recent, most terrible report came from the Algerian countryside — of two young women whose throats were cut because they refused to engage in "pleasure marriages" with Muslim guerrilla fighters — there were many outside Algeria who refused to believe it. What kind of Islamic fundamentalist murders Muslim girls because they will not indulge in what is, in many cases, a form of prostitution?

A few months ago, Mr. Zeroual's government would have tried to censor reports of such atrocities on the grounds that they were an exaggeration. But to mediatise les atrocités is now common practice. The two girls did indeed have their throats cut — their heads were afterwards cut from

their bodies. One of them was 25, the other 21, and both had been kidnapped along with other members of their family from their home at Bida. Their bodies were dumped beside the Bida-Algiers motorway, their relatives later freed in a police raid. Anyone who doubts this should have listened to the voice of an Algiers housewife, talking down the echoing phone-line to Beirut before the girls were murdered. "I'm terrified every time I take the bus from home," she said, "because so many women are getting kidnapped. They take old women to cook and clean and they take young women for their pleasure."

If savage is therefore too weak a word to describe this war, perhaps ferocious is a better adjective. According to a defecting Algerian army officer, there are 50,000 troops engaged full-time in the "anti-terrorist struggle". He spoke of "secret liquidation" of many suspected Islamists, of police raids after the murder of security forces personnel that would end with policemen choosing five men at random from the neighbourhood and summarily executing them in reprisal. No wonder that a columnist in La Nation could state baldly last week that "the fear of

tomorrow is greater than the fear of today."

And here are the words of the writer Jules Roy, the piednoir and former air force officer whose courageous *La Guerre d'Algérie* exposed French cruelty in the independence war. He loved Algeria with his soul but said last week: "I don't want to see it. Everything is overgrown with ruined slums, by the FIS and by the dictatorship of the National Liberation Front (which ruled Algeria for 30 years up to 1990) which has been rotted away by money. The Arabs have only changed despots."

And here is a first-hand account of fraternal war: "Up the hill at Duc des Cars, there were two boys who went to school together and lived in the same building. One of them was a fundamentalist, the other a policeman. The fundamentalist was sent to a prison camp in the south. When he got out, he wanted revenge so he killed his schoolfriend, the policeman. So the policeman's father killed the Islamist. Everyone in our neighbourhood knew them."

"If you go to a policeman's funeral, the FIS says you're with the government. And if you go to an Islamist's funeral, the police come after you. So the people in our building paid condolences to both families."

The causes of the current tragedy are almost academic. The winners of the 1954-62 struggle, the National Liberation Front, betrayed their revolution, setting up dictatorships mired in corruption, sending the 60,000 female maquisards back to their kitchens, ignoring the freedoms they had promised their own people.

The most famous of the FLN survivors, Houari Boumedienne, allowed an almost Maoist severity to rule

his intelligence, sending all rivals to the dungeons. Socialist-style industrialisation turned a potentially wealthy nation into a land of beggars where men now sleep 16 to a room in the sprawling bidonvilles of the great cities. When democracy was tried, it produced a clear win for the FIS; and then the army stepped in. The only uncorrupt leader the Algerians were given, old Mohammad Boudiaf, brought back from Moroccan exile at the start of the guerrilla war in 1992, proved too good for his own people. He was shot dead by one of his own policemen.

Did the eight-year independence war kill too many Algerians? Did all the real leaders die in battle or in the torture chambers of General Massu's paras? Certainly there is in Algeria — on all sides — a tragic failure of leadership. Phil Rees, the BBC journalist who has just travelled through the Alge-

rian interior with one of the armed Islamist groups is probably right in his conclusion that 132 years of brutal French repression and the terrifying war of independence bred a culture of violence in Algeria, which cannot be eliminated because it lies so deeply in the national psyche, both Islamic and secular.

Full-scale civil war — and that is what Algeria is entering — would be of Bosnian proportions, the Berbers fighting Islamists, the Islamists fighting the government, the Western-educated élite turning into a freelance militia. Can Europe stand aloof from a calamity that will inevitably endanger French security? Or must the West now consider a massive U.N. deployment, larger than anything previously contemplated, to put out the fires of Algeria?

The Independent

LETTERS

We are all responsible

To the Editor:

I would like to express my sincere respect and highest appreciation to the Jordan Times tackling crucial issues related to our daily life; sexual harassment is a case in point.

Indeed, such an unhealthy phenomenon always outrages me as I see it everyday; it outrages anyone who has dignity and honour in this Arab country. I think this issue deserves constructive debates and just solutions.

Men and women complete each other and every sex has its own duties, rights and limitations. Or, let me say, each of them has a limited and clear orbit that it must rotate in a quietly and orderly way to avoid explosion and hindrances. As a fresh male graduate from the Jordan University, I had observed and still observe ugly phenomena of sexual harassment by men, whether in universities, on campuses, buses, in markets, public places, etc.

I constantly ask myself about such an unacceptable behaviour. In the great majority of cases men are to be blamed. But a great number of women are not conservative or at least moderate in their attire, appearance, hair style and quantity and quality of perfumes. Naturally, such things may open a door for offenders to take the opportunity to misbehave, bother, comment, sneer and harass, a shameful attitude in our Arab-Islamic country.

It goes without saying that our society abominates and disdains such a behaviour and punishes anybody who tries to break the law. We should let every individual know that he/she is living in a democratic, Islamic and Arab country. We are not in other liberal countries who consider sexual harassment something normal.

From my experience, I find that married men are equally capable to stare, leer and comment when women pass by.

As for teenagers, they are socially ill. They are in need of education and psychological and mental culture.

I do not want to lay blame on men only or on women, but there are fundamental components that should be blamed starting with the family, the nucleus of the society, to the supreme authority in our society. The family is not enough equalised and interested to implant in children's minds valuable notions to enable them to distinguish good from bad.

Syllabi in our schools do not treat issues like sexual harassment under the pretext that it is shameful. Universities consider students quite mature and far-sighted. But a large number of them, males and females, are in urgent need to be taught responsibility and knowledge to enable them to progress and develop.

I am asking why all our scientific foundations, such as schools, colleges, universities, are not outraged by such shameful behaviours? Have we been lulled into complacency? What has happened to our ideas and values? We are nothing if we cannot at least do something to let our daughters, sisters and mothers move peacefully in our society. We all should take serious stances without taking sides. Indeed, we are all responsible for resolving problems of our society.

Hassan Tayyem,
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Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and communications from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

U.S., Europe struggle with problems

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — Worn out by the war in Bosnia, troubled by old suspicions and weakened by domestic political problems, U.S. and European leaders can find little comfort as the end of the year approaches.

A diplomatic marathon over the last two weeks, which included a disastrous security conference in Budapest and ended on Saturday with the European Union summit in Germany, showed in stark relief just how much trouble they now face.

Real questions were asked at these meetings about the future shape of the continent, how to stop the conflicts in Bosnia and elsewhere, Russia's place in the post-cold war world and the troubled state of relations with the United States.

Although progress was made in some areas, much of what emerged was bitter disagreement or statements that paped over the cracks — along with a palpable sense of fatigue and loss of control, some of it even displayed in public.

"I've never seen an atmosphere like we've had in the past few weeks," said a senior diplomat who attended all the meetings. "There's a real 'fin de siècle' weariness, a sense that we are failing to build the kind of world we want."

With anguish over the inability to end Europe's worst conflict since World War II poisoning every meeting, there is little talk now in the corridors of power about grand schemes or blueprints for a "European security architecture."

Instead, diplomats say, a more low-key approach is starting to emerge through which small steps are taken in those areas where it is possible. The two-day European Union summit in Essen, Germany, which ended on Saturday, was a shining example.

Leaders of the 12-nation bloc managed to agree that U.N. peacekeepers should continue their relief work in Bosnia for as long as possible and issued yet another statement containing a well-worn appeal for a ceasefire and an end to the war.

Several of them hailed this as an achievement following the debacle at the 53-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) meeting in Budapest a few days earlier.

That meeting ended in humiliating disarray, Russia vetoed a statement on the Bosnia crisis because the Muslim-led government wanted the CSCE to condemn "Serb aggression."

Worried that it could be isolated as it struggles with crises in Chechnya and elsewhere, Russia has also launched a new attack on NATO plans to discuss expansion to the East.

Moscow refused to sign up to a plan for closer military cooperation with the 16-nation alliance at a Brussels meeting of foreign ministers earlier this month, causing more worry to NATO and Eastern European nations keen to join.

"This issue is burdened by past history. A great deal of sensitivity is required," German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said after the EU summit on Saturday.

At that meeting, EU leaders invited their counterparts from six Eastern European countries and pledged to bring them gradually into the fold.

But they set no date — despite requests to do so from Poland and others. The EU has also left difficult political decisions about how Eastern European membership would affect subsidies in areas like agriculture to a later date.

Moreover, the EU must now start a debate about how it can continue to function properly when it expands its membership and whether it should take on a real role in defence.

However, diplomats say

one of the most troubling aspects of the last few weeks has been the deterioration of the once-solid relationship between the United States and its European allies which has led to one of the worst rifts in NATO history.

A U.S. pledge to help peacekeepers out of Bosnia if needed may have repaired some of the damage, but Washington's decision to stop enforcing the international arms embargo for Bosnia's Muslims and other rows have left deep scars.

There seems little that any government can do.

President Boris Yeltsin is under pressure at home not to ease up on NATO, widely seen in Russia as a potential foe. U.S. President Bill Clinton faces trouble from a Congress that will be dominated by Republicans next year.

Western European leaders, many of them unpopular as they struggle to cut unemployment queues, are not much better off.

French President Francois Mitterrand is seriously ill and in any case leaves office after elections next May.

Germany's Kohl saw his coalition's majority cut back sharply at elections in October, while British Prime Minister John Major is so unpopular he may not even survive until the next elections are due in 1997.

Features

Fahrelnissa Zeid — a light for today's artists

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Many photos remain from the life of the late artist Fahrelnissa Zeid. One of the more interesting ones, perhaps, is an old black-and-white family portrait taken during the last years of the now-vanished Ottoman empire, some 80 years ago.

Fahrelnissa Shaker, as she would have been called then, is perhaps nine years old. She, her mother, six brothers and sisters were dressed and posed with an elegant meticulousness which leaves no doubt as to the rank of the family portrayed. Standing behind them is her father, a pasha in the Turkish army, with a beard and handlebar moustache. He stares dead-on into the camera with unblinking pride.

Birth into a noble house was not all that Her Royal Highness Fahrelnissa Zeid was gifted with, as shown by a second relic from those twilight days of the Ottomans which is on display as part of a new exhibition at Darat Al Funun. A painting she did of her grandmother, when the artist was only 14, would challenge some adult, professional artists to paint its equal.

Some of the finest art schools in Istanbul and Europe were open to the young painter. But as she matured into adulthood, she seems to have been keenly aware of the possibility that her work might be dismissed by onlookers as simply another result of a rich woman's hobbies.

In 1960, she spoke to an interviewer of her desire not to be remembered as what her Turkish countrymen had come to name a "Kabaagatchili", or "a kind of freak... a lady of the Turkish feudal nobility who has thrown her yashmak over her head, Allah knows why, on becoming the first woman painter of her country much as other emancipated women of her generation have be-

come politicians, physicians or lawyers."

Thirty years before those words, a professor in France who had seen her sitting contentedly after completing a painting in his class, snatched up her canvas and threw it on the floor in front of her. When a friend of the young woman's later approached the professor and asked him what was the reason for his outburst, his response was brutal and blunt.

"This woman has a tremendous talent but she is a society lady who is just having fun," he snapped. "It is my job to break her for her own sake!"

With time, however, her work as an artist would develop further and eventually prove to be anything but play. Critics have by now acclaimed her as one of the finest women painters to come from the Middle East. The sum of her efforts, which include an art school she founded and ran in Jordan during the last years of her life, can arguably be said to have been one of the major encouragements for other talented women of the region to break loose from tradition and pursue their own careers as professional artists.

Although only those who knew Fahrelnissa Zeid intimately would know for sure, possible firewood for the furnace which pushed her to prove herself as more than just a "Kabaagatchili" is not so difficult to find. For one, her family did not possess merely wealth and rank — it was a beehive of intellectual activity as well. Her father, Shaker Pasha, was an accomplished historian and poet. A brother and sister of hers would go on to prove themselves in their own right as novelist and painter respectively. One suspects that while growing up in such a potentially competitive environment, the young Fahrelnissa had little leeway to develop a penchant for self-congratulation, no matter how prodigious and manifest her talents were.

Then, there is the fact that

regardless of her social status, the professional art world of the early 20th century was not a welcoming one for any woman artist, no matter what her walk of life. Pasha's daughter or not, Fahrelnissa was a woman living in an age when professional women artists were not only a novelty in Europe, they were unheard of in the Middle East.

Finally, there was the dynamo of nonstop, dizzying mental activity which more than one observer noted in describing her: "She is aware of a great emotional or spiritual turmoil within herself as she works." "In her bewilderment, her enthusiastic dedication to self-expression... she often says so much that she may contradict herself..."

One French critic remarked that "one has to have met her in her studio flat... to appreciate the... energy which animated her."

"Anyone would have been overcome by this accumulation of objects," he added, "the furniture, cushions, carpets, all demanding one's gaze by their colours..."

This volatile, rapid-fire nature of Fahrelnissa Zeid, the artist, stamps its brand on all the works she ever did as a mature painter. Indeed all of the many portraits she painted, studies in a field which normally calls for attention to close-up, static detail, are well done enough — but few, if any, are remarkable.

It is in the broader spaces and dimensions of her other works — they range through everything from still-lives of living rooms to fantastic abstracts and violent scenes of war — that her distinctive gift of volatility finds the fuel it needs to erupt and blaze through the canvas — and light a trail for future generations of women artists from the Middle East to follow.

The exhibition of works by Fahrelnissa Zeid which opened at Darat Al Funun on Dec. 8 under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, ends on Jan. 5.



Portrait by Fahrelnissa Zeid on display at Darat Al Funun

Egyptian art slams American dream

By Nadia Abou Al Magd
The Associated Press

CAIRO — Every night, a model of the Statue of Liberty explodes in a downtown theatre in a firing climax to the play "Mama Amrika."

The explosive ending always draws cheers, which says much about attitudes among the audience of Egyptians and other Arabs. The play is only one of several, works gaining popular success by aiming barbs at America.

Mohammad Sobhi, director and star, says the scene is meant to depict "the false sense of the symbol of liberty which does not exist outside the borders of the United States — unless there is oil or uranium."

Three recent movies — "The Land of Dreams," "Abracadabra America" and "Visit of Mr. President" — criticize U.S. policies and chide Egyptians for wanting to emigrate to the United States.

This doesn't mean all Egyptians are anti-American. There is a fascination with things American, from jeans and T-shirts to McDonald's restaurants.

But in Egypt — a strong U.S. ally and one of the top recipients of American foreign aid — many people see the United States and its cohort Israel as trying to dominate the Middle East at the expense of the Arabs.

In "Mama Amrika," a black comedy heavy with symbolism, the hero represents Egypt. He and his brothers (other Arab nations) are in a struggle with a rich businessman (America) who are out to usurp the brothers' inheritance.

In the end, the hero's mind is taken over by mysterious injections after he marries America. He goes to see the Statue of Liberty — symbol of freedom — but it explodes in front of him.

He is arrested by a policeman who declares: "If you are Egyptian and Arab, you must be a terrorist!"

hero protests. "Yes, I'm Egyptian, I'm Arab, but I'm not a terrorist. I love America, I love peace," his screams go in vain, and he is led away.

Mr. Sobhi said its not only Egyptians who applaud the play's cynical view of America. Half the spectators are Gulf Arabs who find the play "expresses what they cannot say and don't hear back in their home countries," he said.

Madiba Al Saffy, a sociologist at the American University in Cairo, sees the success of anti-American works as part of "a trend of resentment" towards the United States.

She notes many people are bitter that the United States, while claiming to champion human rights, has done little to stop oppression of Palestinians and Bosnian Muslims.

Mustafa Al Said, a Cairo University political scientist, said Egyptians also feel Washington did not deliver promised prosperity after the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty.

Egypt gets \$2.1 billion in annual U.S. aid — the mystery injections of "Mama Amrika" — but an anticipated rush of Western investment never materialized.

"There is definitely a feeling of disappointment experienced by the majority of Egyptian people as to what they expected the U.S. could do," Mr. Al Said said.

The movie "Visit of Mr. President" also reflects a bitter view of American aid. It comes from a novel by leftist writer Youssef Al Qaid about then-president Nixon's visit to Egypt in 1974.

In the film, an entire village goes wild when the rumour spreads that Mr. Nixon will visit and bring U.S. assistance. Peasants abandon their traditional galabiyas and wear jeans and T-shirts, and soon people are fighting over who will get the American aid.

Mr. Nixon never comes, and Mr. Al Qaid said his novel was meant to "warn Egyptians against the destructive American dream and urge them to reject American aid."

Japan haunted by phantoms of World War II

By Pierre-Antoine Donnet
Agence France Presse

TOKYO — Fifty-three years after its surprise attack on the U.S. naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, Japan is still haunted by its militarist past which is inhibiting its ambitions to play a bigger international role.

Tokyo's devastation of the U.S. navy base in Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941, triggered Washington's entry into World War II and ultimately led to the downfall of the Japanese empire that once spanned much of Asia.

Following its colonisation of Korea in the early 20th century and China which it partially occupied in 1937, the Japanese military swept across much of the Asia-Pacific region, gobbling up islands and capitals in the race to construct a "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere."

This dream was destroyed with the dropping of U.S. atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and Japan's surrender on Aug. 15.

Yet nearly half a century later these dark pages of history are still a sensitive issue for Japan, with the controversy surrounding its role during the war which cost millions of lives in Asia far from over.

Last week controversy erupted again with the unveiling of a U.S. postage stamp marking the 50th anniversary of the war which depicted a mushroom cloud from an atomic bomb and carried the legend "atomic bombs hasten war's end, August 1945."

In recent months Tokyo has shown a desire to make amends with its Asian neighbours for its militarist past. Earlier this year, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama issued apologies to the victims of Japanese military aggression throughout Asia.

He said: "The war brought miserable sacrifices beyond description to people in Asia as those around the world. Always humbly, we must build relations based on trust with countries concerned."

The Japanese government

is currently studying setting up a private fund to compensate thousands of Asian women forced to become sex slaves for Japanese troops during the war.

But official statements by some of the country's leaders regularly cast doubts on the government's sincerity.

In May, then-Justice Minister Shigetomo Nagano publicly denied that the 1937 Nanjing massacre in China, one of the worst instances of Japanese aggression, ever took place.

An allied war crimes tribunal had found that Japanese troops killed more than 100,000 unarmed civilians in the city.

In August this year, environment minister, Shin Sakurai, denying the expansionist nature of the war carried on by Japan argued that the imperial army had helped liberate some Asian nations from Western colonialism.

Both ministers were forced to resign, but many commentators believed their statements reflected an attitude still prevalent among Japan's ruling class.

But little by little the country's taboos are falling, giving way to a new frankness, including on the delicate issue of the responsibilities of former wartime emperor Hirohito who died in 1989.

Saburo Sakai, 78, one of the country's most famous war pilots, told foreign journalists recently: "Of course the emperor has responsibility, he was the commander-in-chief. If he shares the honours, he should also share the responsibilities."

Kenzo Oe, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature this year, said in Stockholm on Sunday that Japan should maintain its pacifist constitution despite calls to amend it.

"If we do not stick to the spirit of the post-war constitution," he said, "we will be betraying Asia, Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

The Japanese constitution, largely imposed by the United States, prohibits the use of military force to solve international disputes.

Ethiopia to begin war crimes trials

By Terry Leonard
The Associated Press

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — Somewhere, the hangman waits. The day of reckoning is at hand for Ethiopia's former military rulers.

On Tuesday, Ethiopia opens the most sweeping war crimes trials since the end of World War II, seeking the death penalty for dozens of members of the former military junta on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

It has been a long time coming. Two decades after the coup that deposed Emperor Haile Selassie and ushered in 17 years of Marxist military dictatorship during which tens of thousands of people died.

Jailed junta members deny any guilt and accused prosecutors of manufacturing evidence of mass killings.

Prosecutors say up to 3,000 military underlings and civilian henchmen could face charges linked to the systematic killing of Ethiopians considered a threat to the junta, which was ousted in May 1991. The Red Cross says about 1,700 of the suspects are in prison waiting to be charged.

"This shows there is justice and you cannot escape from justice," said Amde Akalework, whose father, a former justice minister, and uncle, the prime minister, were summarily executed by the military regime in 1974.

"It will not satisfy me — it will not bring back my family — but I hope it gives a lesson. You cannot just murder and massacre," she said.

The trial will be watched closely by those preparing for international war crimes tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

"I'm sure it will set the standards not only in Africa, but throughout the world," said Peter Bach, a Danish lawyer hired by the International Commission of Jurists to help set up a public defender's office in Ethiopia.

Prosecutors promise fair proceedings, and Mr. Bach said he has seen nothing to indicate the trials will not be fair. The government says the trials will be fully open to journalists and international observers.

Special prosecutor Ghirma

Wakjira filed charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in October against 73 members of the Dergue, the Amharic initials for the former Ruling Provisional Military Administrative Committee.

Seven of the defendants are believed to be dead, 45 are in custody and 21 will be tried in absentia, including former President Mengistu Haile Mariam, who fled to Zimbabwe when the junta was overthrown.

The charges list 269 separate acts of genocide that tie the defendants to the killings of 1,823 identified victims.

The first weeks are expected to deal only with procedural formalities. Reading the 268 pages of charges could take days by itself, and it could be more than a month before the prosecution begins to present evidence.

Prosecutors say they have more than 309,000 pages of documents from the former government, including orders to kill. Other evidence reportedly includes videotapes made by the former regime of mass killings and audio recordings of the minutes of committee meetings that ordered executions.

"When the Dergue was overthrown most of the officials fled or surrendered without having a chance to hide or destroy documents. We found everything under lock," said Abraham Tesfaye, a deputy special prosecutor and spokesman for the office.

"Tens of thousands of victims or prison inmates told us what they saw with their own eyes: Who killed whom, who was torturing whom," he added.

The junta's bloody reign began with the execution of 60 officials from the emperor's cabinet on the night of Nov. 23, 1974. The men were gunned down with automatic weapons and dumped in a mass grave at the imperial palace.

"There is a full record of what happened that night," said Ashenafi Shifferaw, a deputy finance minister imprisoned by the junta. He said documents show who gave the orders, who killed the men, even how many and what kind of bullets were used.

Santa... From Finland to Jordan

Once again, Santa Clause has set on his long yearly trip from Finland packed with presents and goodies on board the new **BRITISH AIRWAYS** flight to Amman and will stay at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan.

Children Drawing Competition
age 4-10 years
Children are invited to draw a card about Jordan and deliver it to Santa on either the 14th or 15th of December and have the opportunity to win the first prize; mother and child trip to London on board **BRITISH AIRWAYS** and 4 nights stay at Hotel Inter-Continental.

14th of December Santa will have an appearance at **Alahlia - Abela Superstore** from 4:00-6:00 p.m. to receive your cards. Children can have a photo shoot with Santa. Buy now your child a gift from **Alahlia - Abela** and let Santa offer it on your behalf.

For more information call 688471/81/91

Annual Children Christmas Party
15th of December 3:00-6:00 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom
JD 6,500 inclusive per child
JD 1,500 photo session with Santa
Enter the competition and deliver your cards to Santa.
Special Children Buffet, games, gifts and fun!
For reservations and information please call 641361 ext. 2222.

Drawing competition on the 15th of December at 8:00 p.m. at Alahlia - Abela Superstore

20 more prizes will be given by **BRITISH AIRWAYS** & **Alahlia - Abela Superstore**

Refreshments and giveaways donated by **PEPSI**

Pan-American summit wraps up on upbeat note

MIAMI (R) — The first summit of the Americas in 27 years ended Monday with plans to create the world's largest free trade zone by the year 2005 as a way of replacing poverty with prosperity in lands of few rich and many poor.

President Bill Clinton called the free trade zone declaration "a watershed" in the history of the hemisphere and vowed it would create millions of jobs from Alaska to Argentina bringing prosperity not just to the United States but to the traditionally-poor countries of Latin America.

The summit was a success for the embattled Clinton, who despite mounting political unpopularity at home had forged one free trade agreement after another in recent

months as a means of reviving the U.S. economy and creating new jobs.

As soon as the 34 presidents and prime ministers had signed their five-page summit declaration and 27-page "plan of action," Mr. Clinton was at it again.

Along with the leaders of Canada and Mexico, Mr. Clinton announced Chile will become the fourth nation to join the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) saying its pioneering free market reforms made it an ideal business partner.

A beaming Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien said, "for one year now, we have been the three amigos. Starting today, we will be the four amigos." Taking Chile into NAFTA is expected to take two years.

Mr. Clinton said the summit created a new spirit of cooperation among the nations of the western hemisphere which he called, "the spirit of Miami," a phrase he repeated in Spanish, Portuguese and French — the other languages of the hemisphere — to get his point across.

But not everyone was as convinced as Mr. Clinton that free trade was the panacea he had painted it to be.

Said Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur, "trade liberalisation can be the tide that lifts all boats but in the Caribbean we know that a quickly-rising tide can overturn the smaller and unbalanced boats."

The tariff-free zone would be the world's largest, encompassing 850 million people by the year 2005 and an economy of over \$14 trillion.

The summit also agreed on a wide range of issues including cracking down on drug money launderers and corrupt politicians and phasing out the use of leaded petrol in the hemisphere by the year 2000.

The 34 leaders pledged to push for laws in their countries that would freeze and confiscate money laundered by drug cartels and to consider sharing the seized assets among the countries of the hemisphere.

The three-day meeting spawned a total of 14 more summits, ministerial conferences and symposiums over the next two years to talk

about everything from sustainable energy to drugs.

A plethora of new initiatives — including a "partnership for pollution prevention," an "invigorating society" programme and a "white helmets emergency and development corps" — will also give officials plenty to talk about.

Mr. Clinton dominated the conference, as U.S. presidents had traditionally done. But the big winner at the summit was Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who was making his first trip aboard since returning to power last October after a three-year exile.

He was cheered and applauded wherever he went and his speech to the summit was a litany of "thank you's"

— mostly to Mr. Clinton for sending U.S. troops to Haiti to restore democracy.

"We hope one day President Clinton will come to Haiti. You will be welcome. You will be home," he told Mr. Clinton in his speech to the summit before striding over and warmly shaking the politically-embattled U.S. president's hand.

"We are poor but happy and we thank you for that," Mr. Aristide added.

Another summit winner was Cuba's Fidel Castro, who was excluded from the event. Although all the participants agreed Cuba should become a democracy no one could agree on how to get President Castro out and the issue was hardly discussed.

Arab Gulf countries set for another fiscal year of tight budgets

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states are set to tighten their belts for another fiscal year to keep budget deficits under control as oil output remains unchanged and a major price increase appears unlikely.

Bahrain, a minor Middle East oil producer, is the only member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to have announced slightly higher spending in its 1995 budget due to its reliance on aid from Saudi Arabia.

Low oil prices have forced the six GCC members to slash expenditure in 1994, cutting their projected budget deficit to around \$9 billion from \$14.6 billion in 1992 and \$36 billion in 1991.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil producer and exporter, on Friday announced it was to slash its 1995 spending by 20 per cent which could see expenditure hit a record low of around \$34 billion. It follows a similar cut in 1994

which brought expenditure down to \$42.6 billion from \$52.5 billion in 1993.

With a production of eight million barrels per day (b/d) and an assumed minimum oil price of \$15 in 1995, its revenues could be still above \$43 billion, creating a budget surplus of nearly \$9 billion for the first time since oil prices began to climb down in the mid 1980s.

But a Gulf banker said: "This is merely a theoretical assumption. We have to take into consideration the actual rather than the projected spending."

GCC states were hurt the most by the oil price deterioration as crude exports account for more than 80 per cent of their total exports.

During the oil boom in the late 1970s and early 1980s, their budgets recorded large surpluses, enabling them to build up huge investment empires abroad.

Indonesia opens Asia-Africa cooperation forum

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's President Suharto, chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), launched a meeting Monday that will give African nations the chance to learn from Asia's dynamic economies.

President Suharto, who has used his tenure as NAM chief to call for greater cooperation among developing nations, said the meeting, which starts Tuesday, would also discuss efforts to promote sustainable development, the promotion of human resources and agriculture.

"In this meeting, our colleagues from Africa will have the chance to conduct a dialogue with their Asian colleagues on various development issues," he said in Jakarta.

As Asian economies steam towards the next century on high rates of growth and increased living standards, several African nations still suffer from the effects of civil war and famine.

Nana Sutrisna, Indonesia's ambassador to the 111-member NAM, said Saturday the economic forum would be attended by 100 delegates from 45 African and 10 Asian countries.

The meeting, to be held in the west Java city of Bandung, was organised by Indonesia, Japan and the United Nations Development Programme. The meeting ends Friday.

Bandung was the scene in 1985 of a landmark Asia-Africa conference.

President Suharto, 73, who has steered Indonesia from near bankruptcy in the mid-1960s to more than two decades of sustained economic growth, said regional countries were happy to share their experiences with African nations.

Japan's Nomura forecasts yen bloc in Asia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Japan's surging yen could topple the U.S. dollar as Asia's predominant currency, forming a de facto yen bloc in the region, the country's biggest fund manager has said.

Nobumitsu Kagami, vice president of Nomura Investment Management, told a Sydney conference that trade and investment among Asian countries and Japan would forge closer integration and interdependence.

"This may, in turn, lead to a gradual formation of a de

facto yen bloc within the region in which the use of the yen will begin to increase as a regional key currency," he said.

Japan's increasing role as an Asian investor made his forecast "logical enough, especially now that the persistent weakness of the U.S. dollar has seriously eroded the confidence that the countries in the region traditionally have held in this currency," Mr. Kagami said.

He said 1994 could be remembered as a "major

watershed" in the yen's progress as an international currency, adding that Japanese investors were shifting allegiance from U.S. bonds to Euro-yen bonds.

"In looking back, Japan's experience as a world major creditor nation has been unique in that it has held the majority of its massive foreign assets in U.S. dollars, the world's largest debtor nation currency whose value has been declining consistently," he added.

Japanese investors buying

U.S.-dollar assets had to bear the bulk of the foreign exchange risk, "a situation which is not only unsustainable but also may have caused serious distortions in Japanese investment abroad."

About 40 per cent of Japan's exports were denominated in yen and only 20 per cent of imports, and it was seldom used as the denomination currency for trade between third countries.

"However, the use of the yen as a denomination currency has increased rapidly in recent years in Japan's trade with Asian countries," Mr. Kagami said, rising to 53 per cent for exports and 26 per cent of imports in fiscal year 1993.

The world's monetary authorities held only eight per cent of total foreign exchange reserves in yen, compared to 65 per cent for the U.S. dollar and 13 per cent for the Deutschmark, he said.

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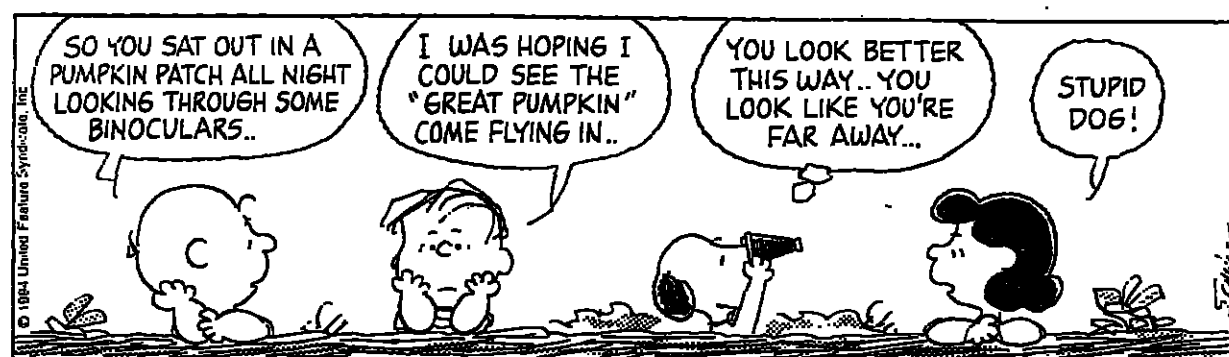
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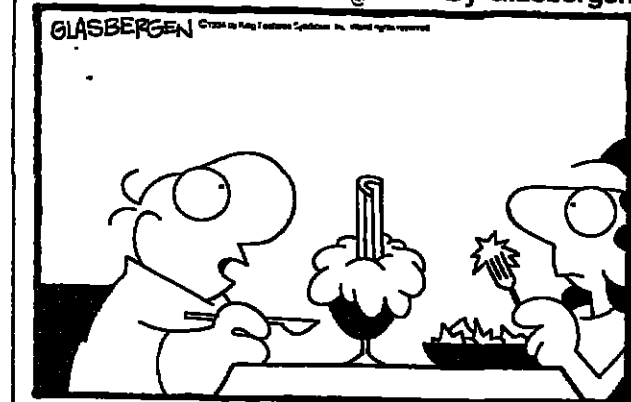
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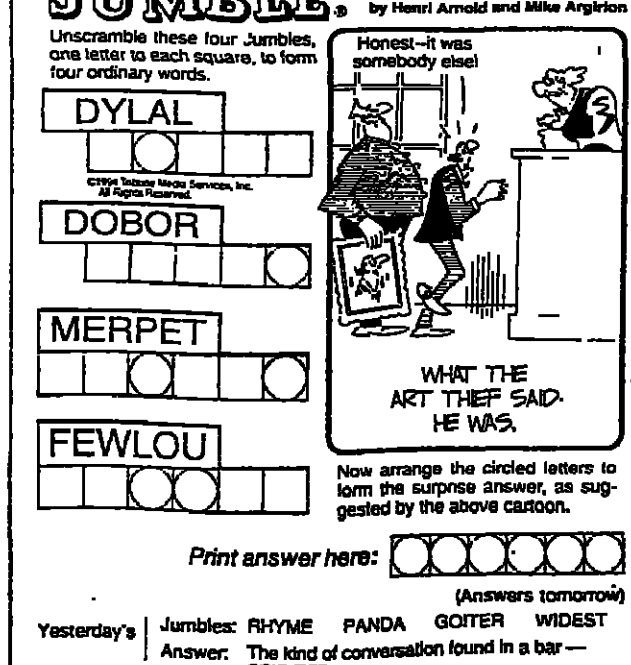
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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: If you properly attuned to your planets, you should be starting the new week with more enthusiasm that will lead to a better working relationship with associates who are cooperative.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't get involved in business affairs. Work on ideas which are creative and can bring fine results. Don't criticise a fellow associate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't permit an outside partner to take over, concentrate on improving conditions at home. Keep busy at home and be happy with your loved ones.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Assignments are quite tedious today so handle only what is absolutely necessary. Visit friends who are cheerful and pleasing.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get into monetary matters and avoid seeking pleasure. Forget all that wishful thinking and be more practical.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get into outside duties and get away from home for a while and restore your energies. Be happier, but don't overspend on pleasures.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Have a consultation with a clever person who can give you good ideas for advancement. Show true devotion towards your loved ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get out and shop with a friend; forget problems for the time being. Concentrate on the personal side of life and restore your energies.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Getting expert advice is wise now, since your own judgment is a little off at this time. Get involved in some public affair.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Fussing over some problem you cannot solve is not wise, so turn to something else which is more constructive and beneficial.

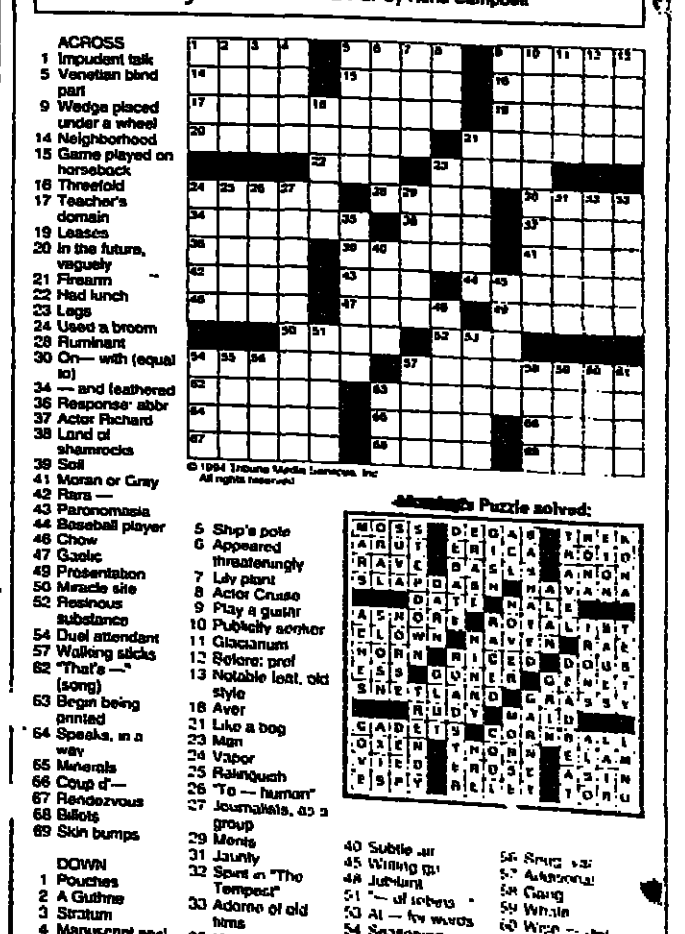
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Avoid that friend who likes to con you, and get busy at responsibilities ahead of you. Buy some thoughtful gift of love for your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be more with dynamic partners who are generous and ambitious. Handle only those duties which are important. Be alert to problems.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get busy at regular tasks and forget something new and unknown. Accept the suggestions and advice from fellow associates.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

THE Daily Crossword by Rena Campbell



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Which brought...
down to \$4.5 billion in 1993.
With a production of...
million barrels per day...
and an assumed minimum...
price of \$15 in 1995...
venues could be still...
\$4.5 billion, meaning that...
surplus of nearly \$6 billion...
for the first time since...
prices began to climb down...
the mid-1990s.

But a Gulf banker...
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into consideration the...
rather than the...
spending.

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must be...
to...
account for more than 50...
percent of their total...
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During the...
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in 1994.

THE TOP LISTMAS GIFTS

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business daily beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

JD 2 million in assets, but JD 15m in debt

★ Banks and public shareholding companies have received circulars from three official entities demanding that movable and fixed assets of a large but troubled investment group be put under sequestration. According to the circulars, even the personal assets of the partners in the group and their affiliated companies were put under sequestration as demanded by lawyers of three banks and many other large creditors. Some sources estimate the investment group's liabilities at JD 15 million, against only JD 2 million of assets. Rumours have it that the reasons are administrative, citing high spending on buying foreign representations and acquiring local and overseas quarters — all of which at high costs exceeding the volume of quick return funds (Al Aswag).

(The name of the group was not given but is believed to be the Shahin Group. Other sources estimate the group's debt at JD 83 million involving eight banks).

★ The name of the business tycoon who Sunday bought 1.35 million shares of the Amman Bank for Investment is Sabih Al Masri, a Jordanian working in Saudi Arabia. His equity, in his own name or in the name of many companies associated with him, total more than 50 per cent. He is known to have a big stake in Amman's Safeway International (Al Aswag).

★ The 1995 budget for the Karak governorate is approximately JD 19 million (Al Aswag).

★ Sixteen plants produce a total of 120 tonnes of dairy products a day. They employ about 1,500 workers in addition to hundreds of people who are manually engaged in the process. These plants, and others which have been licensed or are planning to venture in this industry, fear an imminent disaster in the dairy sector because of potential high competition. Producers claim that too many dairy farms would lead them to bankruptcy, noting that prices have not been adjusted since 1990. They point to higher costs of input materials, higher wages and taxes, such as the sales tax on plastic containers and aluminium paper foil, and demand that the Ministry of Supply either raise the price of dairy products or allow the price to float according to supply and demand (Al Aswag).

★ Some 1.5 million gas cylinders are on the market, according to an official of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company. He denied that the company has the intention to import one million empty gas cylinders from Russia and noted that 25,000 empty gas cylinders imported from Italy arrived in Amman Saturday. A second 25,000-cylinder shipment is expected soon. He said that the volume of gas in the cylinder was unchanged at 12.5 kilograms (Al Aswag).

★ Public shareholding companies licensed during the first ten months of this year have a combined equity of about JD 230 million, seen by the concerned government parties as having reached a high level of saturation in the market. As such, the concerned parties are seriously considering temporary suspension of licences to establish new holding (public shareholding) companies. Although there would be no official announcement of a temporary suspension, the measure will be taken in many other administrative ways, including the demand to update feasibility studies (Al Aswag).

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
HOODING BANK CENTER AMMAN - REPRESENTATIVE			
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 661170			
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEEKLY 12/12/1994			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	40	7,380	184.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	20,007	38,727	4.500
BANK OF JORDAN	20,007	78,527	3.930
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	250	1,520	1.660
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1,500	5,667	2.980
THE JORDANIAN BANK	4,800	27,440	5.640
JORDAN EGYPT BANK	8,533	25,683	3.010
JORDAN GULF BANK	100	1,204	1.700
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,300	4,823	3.710
JORDAN TELKAB BANK	4,058	19,001	3.700
BUSINESS BANK	100	1,095	3.720
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	588	2,876	4.900
REIT REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FOR HOODING	850	2,895	3.300
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	60,001	93,460	1.560
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	400	1,532	3.830
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	9,400	16,364	1.760
JORDAN FINANCE JERUSALEM	87	362	4.200
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / JEM	500	1,270	2.320
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	400	1,040	2.600
JORDANIAN PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	276	4,373	1.570
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / JEM	23,400	38,802	1.530
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	1,400	4,977	3.250
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2,962	7,155	2.490
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1,050	1,442	1.240
JORDAN GULF BANK	27,119	33,328	1.270
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	2,000	1,188	1.040
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCIAL HOTELS	14,650	36,635	2.510
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	2,000	4,706	3.370
ATLASPORT CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	300	390	1.300
JORDAN PROSPERITY MINING	34,822	100,689	2.990
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	16,500	45,809	2.700
THE ARAB POSTAL/NEW	1,450	8,324	5.720
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	276	2,574	9.240
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	150	758	4.950
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	4,833	8,100	8.050
ARAB PETROCHEMICAL MANUFACTURING	20,252	120,318	5.900
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	775	1,665	6.100
JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	200	289	2.880
ARAB PETROCHEMICAL MANUFACTURING	2,800	18,814	2.710
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	4,650	5,423	1.450
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	2,250	3,228	1.430
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	28,100	26,692	0.960
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	2,250	3,228	1.430
SAVED INVESTMENT	9,473	13,437	4.300
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	800	1,275	1.610
JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	534	1,453	4.500
ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	48,000	10,480	0.860
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MOBILE/TELECOM	4,900	10,330	2.000
JORDAN SOLID-STATE	2,200	2,169	1.800
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1,600	6,844	4.280
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	2,368	6,487	2.730
GRAND TOTAL	376,030	915,851	
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	1	12572	
TRADING VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET	1	238173	

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 12/12/94	Tokyo Close 12/12/94	
Sterling Pound	1.5600	1.5589**	
Deutsche Mark	1.5770	1.5796	
Swiss Franc	1.3560	1.3593**	
French Franc	5.4165	5.4306**	
Japanese Yen	100.05	100.26	
European Currency Unit	1.2120	1.2090**	

Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Date: 12/12/1994			
Currency	4 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.12	6.62 7.06
Sterling Pound	6.00	6.18	6.65 7.12
Deutsche Mark	5.12	5.12	5.25 5.50
Swiss Franc	5.75	4.00	4.18 4.56
French Franc	5.25	5.56	5.75 6.18
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.18	2.31 2.56
European Currency Unit	5.68	6.03	6.15 6.68

Precious Metals			
Date: 12/12/1994			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal
Gold	376.45	7.55	Silver
			USD/Oz
			JD/Gm
			4.75
			0.105

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: 12/12/1994			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040	
Sterling Pound	1.0929	1.0954	
Deutsche Mark	0.4459	0.4461	
Swiss Franc	0.5238	0.5264	
French Franc	0.1291	0.1297	
Japanese Yen	0.6993	0.7028	
Dutch Guilder	0.3963	0.3963	
Swedish Krona	0.0429	0.0431	
Italian Lira	0.0429	0.0431	
Belgian Franc	0.0429	0.0431	

Other Currencies			
Date: 12/12/1994			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8460	1.8620	
Lebanese Lira	0.041200	0.042550	
Saudi Riyal	0.1860	0.1879	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3830	2.3600	
Qatari Riyal	0.7214	0.1923	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.8060	1.8330	
UAE Dirham	0.1905	0.1915	
Greek Drachma	0.2535	0.2175	
Cypriot Pound	1.4000	1.5375	

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Taxpayer kills tax collector

BEIJING (R) — The owner of a private hotel who owed 1,100 yuan (\$129) in back taxes hacked to death the senior inspector handling his case, the Economic Information daily has reported. In a story highlighting the difficulties of collecting taxes in China, it said Sha Guangyu, 37, died when Zhang Xiaowei attacked him with a vegetable knife at his home in Kuan-dian village in the northeastern province of Liaoning. The murder occurred in the early morning, when Mr. Zhang came to Mr. Sha's house to discuss his case. Mr. Sha invited him to sit down and smoke a cigarette. While Mr. Sha insisted Mr. Zhang pay the 100 yuan in tax and 1,000 yuan in fines he owed, Mr. Zhang replied: "You bastard, you want the tax or you want your life?" the report said. When Mr. Sha refused to compromise, Mr. Zhang drew the knife from his pocket and cut him on the face and chest. Mr. Sha resisted fiercely and the fight continued into the yard of his home, before Mr. Sha fell dead from dozens of cuts.

Lebanon seen changing policy on foreign debt

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon, which has traditionally avoided foreign indebtedness, is set to borrow heavily abroad in the next 10 years if parliament accepts a finance ministry recommendation. The ministry recommended borrowing up to \$9 billion abroad to finance Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's Horizon 2000 plan for postwar reconstruction and infrastructure modernisation. It made the proposal in a preamble to the \$11.38 billion, 10-year plan sent to parliament at the weekend. The preamble, signed by Fuad Sinjora, minister of state for finance, said 80 per cent of the cost of the plan should be financed by foreign borrowing and 20 per cent domestically. "As for the way to finance the development expenditures, specially during the period between 1995 and 2000 and until an improvement in the current account

... a policy leading to borrowing 80 per cent of this sum from abroad and 20 per cent locally is recommended," the preamble said. "The reasons for this policy are that the expected cost of borrowing abroad is less than that domestically. This is in addition to the fact that the largest part of these projects will be imports from abroad in foreign currency," it said. Public sector foreign borrowing is controversial in Lebanon and unpopular in parliament which must authorise it. It was used rarely before the 1975-90 civil war and borrowing levels are still relatively low. Foreign debt was only \$327 million at the end of 1993 and now stands at \$764.7 million according to the central bank. However, the ministry's recommendation would nearly double the previous highest estimate of the need for public sector foreign borrowing

for reconstruction. The head of the government's investment agency said last month Lebanon needs to raise about \$500 million a year during the 10-year plan — some \$5 billion. Youssef Choucair, chairman of the Lebanese Investment Authority, said this should be raised through Eurobonds and direct equity funding like BOT (build, operate, transfer) contracts. The government of Mr. Hariri, who has masterminded Lebanon's postwar reconstruction for the past two years, launched Lebanon's first Eurobond issue in September. The \$400 million three-year issue was heavily oversubscribed and the government hailed it as a triumph indicating restored international confidence in Lebanon. But critics inside and outside parliament said the 10.125 per cent interest was too high and set a costly benchmark for future issues.

Australian manufacturers warn of skills shortage

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian manufacturers warned in a survey released Monday they had detected the first signs of what could become a debilitating skills shortage in the rapidly-growing economy. The survey of 504 firms by the Chamber of Manufacturers of New South Wales adds to analysts' concerns that unions pushing for big wage rises could end the country's record of fast growth and low inflation. Manufacturers reported they had difficulty filling 52 per cent of their vacant positions across all occupations, rising as high as 82 per cent for printing trades.

Australia's economy grew by 6.4 per cent in the year September, a pace considered too fast by many economists. Market economists have forecast a lift in the official 6.50 per cent interest rate within months to maintain the country's record on inflation, recorded at 1.9 per cent in the year to September. Analysts said the biggest threat to prices came from unions seeking wage rises that overcompensated for inflation and productivity gains. The 75,000-member Transport Workers Union (TWU) last week secured agreement from transport giants Bram-

bles and Linfox on a claim for wage rises of 15 per cent over the next two years. In a review of the Australian economy over 1994, Citibank Australia said inflationary pressures were largely subdued but "by year end, the focus was on wages and how the enterprise bargaining system would handle a seemingly emboldened union movement." Commonwealth Funds Management warned there were already signs of wages growth, with latest financial data showing that, on a trend basis, wages per employee rose 2.6 per cent in the six months to September.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.			
U.S. \$100 costs	1.3848/58	Canadian dollar	
	1.5770/80	Deutschmarks	
	1.7666/76	Dutch guilders	
	1.3358/68	Swiss francs	
	32.45/49	Belgian francs	
	5.4235/85	French francs	
	1637.4/8.4	Italian lire	
	100.07/17	Japanese yen	
	7.5250/50	Swedish crowns	
	6.8740/90	Norwegian crowns	
	6.1795/45	Danish crowns	
	\$1.5602/12		
One sterling	\$376.90/377.20		
One ounce of gold			

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Juventus, Real Madrid rise to top; Romario leads Barcelona

PARIS (AFP) — Europe's slumbering football giants stirred at weekend with Real Madrid rising to the top in the Spanish League and Juventus back again in Italy. Chastened in the midweek European ties, Real Madrid went top on goal differences with a 2-0 win at home to struggling Oviedo while Juventus capitalised on a Parma's goalless draw at Genoa to go top on goal difference thanks to a 4-3 win at Lazio.

But victory came at a heavy price for Real, seeking self-respect after losing in the UEFA Cup third round to Danish club Odense.

Already deprived of defender Michel with knee ligament trouble, the Madrid club's playmaker Fernando Redondo, was carried off with two minutes to go and will be out for at least two months.

The Argentinian international crumpled in a vicious tackle from Oviedo's Slavisa Jokanovic, who was promptly sent off. Redondo's right knee ligaments are seriously damaged, club doctor Angel Herrador said.

When the ugly incident happened Madrid were already 2-0 up with goals from 17-year-old Raul in the 56th minute and great Dane Michael Laudrup in the 60th.

Barcelona, through to the Champions Cup quarter-final thanks to an unconvincing 1-1 draw with Gothenburg on Wednesday, beat Celta Vigo 4-2 to stay fourth in the table and scored one of the most astonishing goals ever seen.

With two minutes to go, they had just conceded a goal. From the restart Brazilian striker Romario popped the ball up for Romanian midfielder Gheorghe Hagi. He looked up, saw the keeper off his line in dim light, and fired from 50 yards over his head into the net.

"It's the sweetest goal in 70 years on Spanish League football," said Barcelona vice-president Nicolau Casaus.

Four goals were scored in the last five minutes after Hristo Stoichkov and Romario had put Barcelona 2-0 up in the 15th and 59th minute respectively.

Barcelona's Dutch ace Ronald Koeman started the goal rush with an 85th minute penalty, then Losada pulled one back in the 87th minute. Hagi replied in stunning style, the Gudelj, in injury time, gave Oviedo solace with their second goal.

Deportivo La Coruna, level on points with Real, trail on goal difference but not for want of trying.

They shook off their midweek UEFA Cup defeat to Borussia Dortmund by beating Sevilla 5-1, with four goals scored without reply in the first half.

Zaragoza are also level on points with the two top clubs and stay up there with a 1-0 away win at Racing Santander, thanks to an own goal from Jesus Maria Merino in the 76th minute.

In Italy, Juventus snatched the leadership from Parma with their 4-3 win at Lazio.

They move one point clear of Parma and have a goal in hand and bags of confidence after beating third-placed Fiorentina only last week.

Juve are in such good form recently that they can deliver even without their two goal machines: Roberto Baggio, out with a knee injury, and Gianluca Vialli, suspended for one match after collecting two yellow cards.

Lazio, missing their injured Croatian playmaker Alen Boksic, also lost their captain Roberto Craveroa for his second warning after 27 minutes.

They were leading 1-0 though a 20th minute goal from Roberto Rambaudi at the time but Alessandro Del Piero equalised after 37 minutes.

pay-off. But it was not enough to keep them top of the league.

Fiorentina moved up to third place in the table in a heated 1-0 win against bitter rivals AS Roma.

Gabriel Batistuta, the leading scorer in Italy with 13 goals in 12 matches for Fiorentina, failed to score for only the second time this season. He missed a glorious first-half chance, with only the goalkeeper to beat after a superb back-heel from Francesco Baiano. But Giovanni Cervone close down his angle and blocked the shot.

Batistuta's Argentina international striking partner Abel Balbo, second to him in the scoring charts with eight goals and leading the attack for Roma, was equally im-

portant with goals from Marco Simone and Dejean Savicevic. Simone was on target again in the 76th minute and De Biagio got the consolation goal for the home team.

Uruguayan Ruben Sosa missed a penalty as Inter Milan went down 2-0 at home to Napoli with goals from Buso (29) and Cruz (66).

In Germany a hat-trick from playmaker Michael Zorc steered Borussia Dortmund to a 4-0 victory in Hamburg, stretching their lead to four points at the top of the Bundesliga.

Dortmund will enjoy that last victory during the Bundesliga's winter break. Zorc's third goal was also his 100th in the German league, though he is still far from Gerd Muller's legendary record of 365 goals.

Dortmund's win came as second-placed Werder Bremen dropped a point in a goalless home draw with champions Bayern Munich.

In a top of the table class in Portugal, FC Porto and Sporting Lisbon shared the points in a 1-1 draw which leaves them equal on 24 points, though Sporting have the better goal difference.

Porto, managed by former England boss Bobby Robson, went ahead after five minutes with a goal from Brazilian Jose Carlos but midfielder Figo scored the equaliser early in the second half.

Lisbon's club Benfica ran riot at home to Boavista, winning 4-1 and moving into second place in the table with

goals from Argentina striker Claudio Caniggia and Bolivian World Cup star Erwin Sanchez.

In Liverpool Crystal Palace left Anfield with their ninth clean sheet of the season and their self-respect restored after a goalless draw with Liverpool Sunday.

Four months after they were demolished 6-1 by Liverpool on their return to the Premiership, Palace made amends with a determined and well-organised display.

Liverpool, now unbeaten at home in 11 games this season, moved back above Nottingham Forest into fourth position but they are now 10 points behind leaders Blackburn.

In Athens Panathinaikos Athens scored three first-half goals Sunday to beat Xanthi 3-1 and increase its lead in the Greek first division soccer league.

The victory, combined with a 1-0 loss by second-placed OFI Crete to Ionikos Nikea, helped Panathinaikos increase its lead from five to eight points.

After 12 rounds, Panathinaikos has 34 points as against 26 by OFI.

Paok Salonika and cross-town Iraklis share third place with 25 points each.

Paok played to a scoreless draw against Doxa in Drama and Iraklis beat Aris Salonika 3-1 at home.

Panathinaikos dominated the game, played before 7,000 spectators at the Athens Olympic Stadium.

EUROPEAN SOCCER

Del Piero scored a second in the 78th minute to add to Marocchi's 54th minute, strike, and Grabbi added another eight minutes from time.

Plucky Lazio pulled two back in the closing stages, from Casiraghi (83min) and Fuser (90).

Parma came away with a solitary point from a goalless draw at Genoa. With Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla firing blanks and Swedish attacker Tomas Brodin unavailable, Parma were content to consolidate in mid-field and secure a one-point

ten. In the end Roma's Amadeo Carboni obliged Fiorentina by deflecting a free kick from Portugal's Rui Costa, headed on by Brazilian Marcio Santos, into his own net in the 73rd minute.

AC Milan beat Foggia 3-1 for their first away win of the season but are still in the wrong half of the table after nine defeats in 24 matches.

Boosted by their midweek victory over Casino Salzburg which puts them through to the Champions League quarter-finals, Milan were 2-0 up in the first quar-

Blazers upset Kings

PORTLAND (R) — Rod Strickland scored 24 points, including a driving layup with 36 seconds left that sealed a 93-88 victory on Sunday for the Portland Trail Blazers against the Sacramento Kings.

Strickland's layup came off a give-and-go with Clyde Drexler and helped the Blazers extend their homecourt mastery of the Kings, who came to Portland riding a four-game winning streak, to 22 games in a row.

Strickland added eight assists and eight rebounds and Drexler scored 17 points for the Blazers, who never trailed after taking a 6-4 lead.

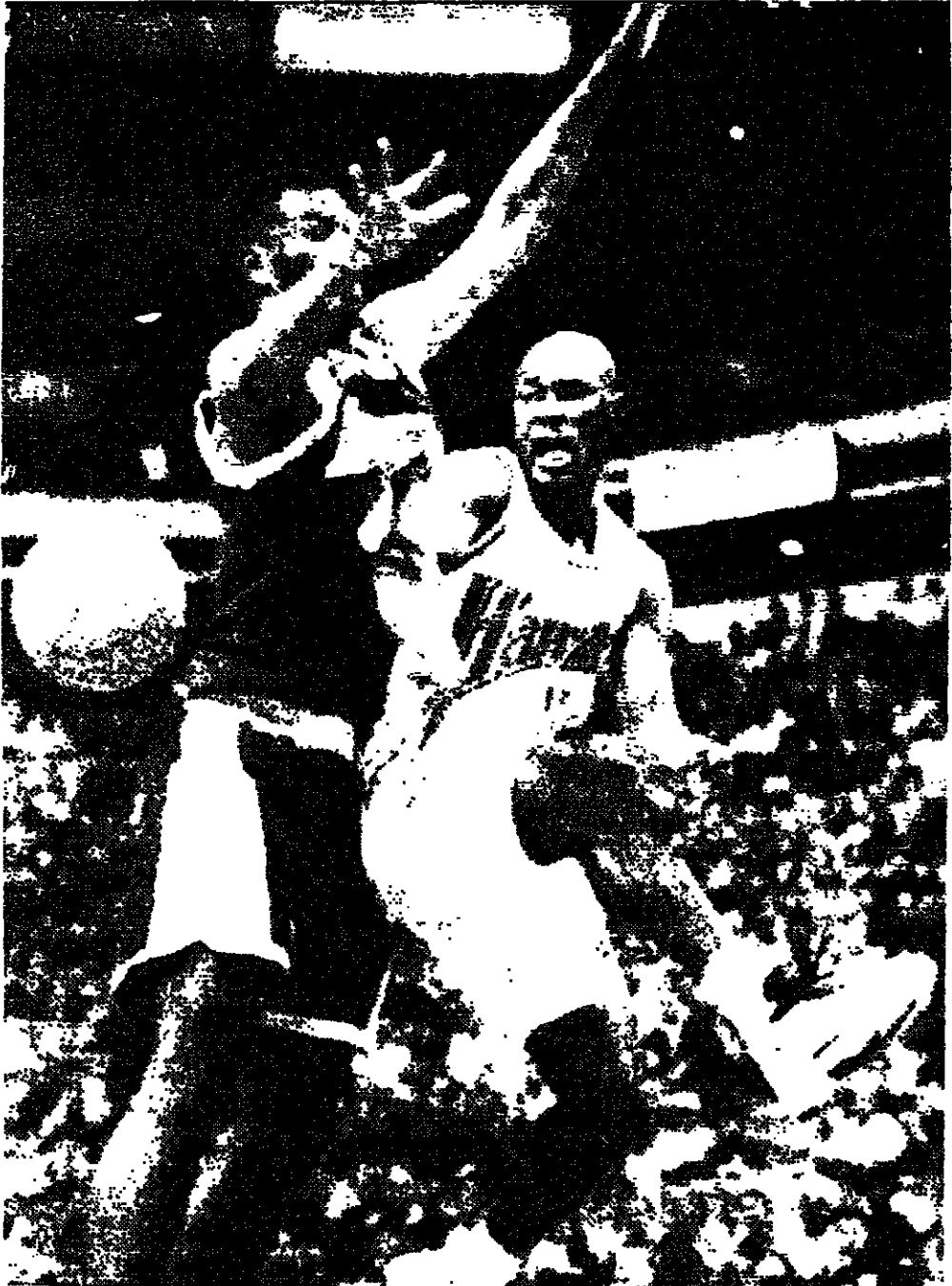
Mitch Richmond and Rookie Brian Grant scored 17 points apiece and Walt Williams added 10 for Sacramento. Richmond and Williams, the team's two leading scorers, were limited to a woeful 7-of-42 from the field.

But the Kings managed to keep the game close. A layup by Grant and a free throw by Richmond, who was a wretched 4-of-23 from the field, closed the deficit to 88-86 with 1:23 to go.

Buck Williams made a 16-footer for Portland and Walt Williams, who was 3-of-19 from the field, scored for the Kings before Strickland's layup provided a four-point lead.

Strickland and Drexler scored seven points apiece in the first quarter as Portland grabbed a 21-17 lead, a 10-footer by James Robinson opened the advantage to 31-21 with 8:37 left in the second period and the Blazers held a 51-43 halftime lead.

The Blazers led by as many as 14 points in the third quarter before the diminutive Spud Webb capped a 10-2 run with an 18-foot jumper that brought the Kings within 74-70 early in the final period.



Atlanta Hawks' Mookie Blaylock (right) passes around L.A. Lakers' Elden Campbell in their NBA game. The Lakers won 92-87 (AFP photo).

Christie calls for Modahl justice

LONDON (AFP) — Linford Christie called for Diane Modahl to be cleared of drug-taking when she appears before a British Athletic Federation disciplinary Tuesday. Christie claimed on a radio show Sunday that not to clear the 800 metre runner would be an injustice. The British men's team captain also ques-

tioned the composition of the five-strong panel which will hear the case. Modahl, a devout Christian, tested positive after a meeting in Lisbon in June and was found to have astonishing high levels of testosterone, the body-building hormone. "Diane doesn't know anything about drugs. If she is not found

innocent, justice has not been done." If Modahl is found guilty she will be banned from competition until 1998 by which time she will be 32 years old and as a proven drugs offender will never again be chosen to represent Britain in the Olympic Games.

U.S. baseball strike enters 5th month

RYE BROOK, N.Y. (AP) — It's the players' turn to respond as the Major League Baseball strike entered its fifth month Monday.

Owners made a new proposal Sunday, replacing a escalating payroll tax with a flat tax. The union, however, said the proposed tax would act just like a salary cap — the main reason players went on strike in the first place.

The exchange left the two sides almost as far apart as they were when the strike began Aug. 12.

Management negotiator John Harrington said the plan was a "substantial move" by the owners, who

received the union's latest proposal just 27 hours earlier. The new plan also has provisions for a secondary tax that owners said would ensure salaries don't escalate.

It didn't seem as if the day's bargaining produced progress, but the owners said their plan embraced some of the union's ideas on future joint ventures.

"They offered us some very interesting, enlightened concepts yesterday that seemed to have opened the door to a partnership," Atlanta Braves president Stan Kasten said. "We think it behooves us to go through that door."

Union head Donald Fehr

said his side needed time to analyze the plan, but his initial reaction wasn't positive. "At first blush, it appears their new proposal contains virtually all the elements of the salary cap," he said.

In an effort to hold down operating costs, team owners have been trying to limit player salaries.

Harrington has said previously that owners will declare an impasse and impose a salary cap unless an agreement is reached by then. A management lawyer, speaking on condition he not be identified, said general managers were sent a packet of material Nov. 28 detailing

how baseball's rules would change following the imposition of the cap.

Fehr said the union will respond to the proposal only when it fully understands the proposal, but said his group will try to have an answer by Monday.

In another development, union lawyer Eugene Orza said the labor department has certified the strike. That means clubs can't ask for visas for replacement players.

Management lawyer Chuck O'Connor said one difficulty created by the certification is that it would take Major Leagues several weeks to obtain visas once the strike is settled.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jansher pulls out over safety fears

NEW DELHI (AFP) — World squash champion Jansher Khan of Pakistan pulled out of the Mahindra international tournament in Bombay at the last moment Sunday over fears for his personal safety, the Press Trust of India reported. Khan did not turn up for the draw of the \$85,000 Mahindra Squash Challenge Tournament, the organisers said in the western city of Bombay. A number of Pakistani cricketers received death threats here following the de-segregation of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu fanatics in December 1992, which fuelled Hindu-Muslim riots in the city.

Hill picks up leading British award

LONDON (R) — Formula One motor racing driver Damon Hill picked up one of Britain's top sports awards Sunday. Hill was voted the BBC Sports Personality of the Year, ahead of athletes Sally Gunnell and Colin Jackson. Hill finished second in this year's World Drivers Championship to Germany's Michael Schumacher, losing his chance of the title after the pair were involved in a controversial collision in the final race of the season at Adelaide. West Indies cricketer Brian Lara who re-wrote the record books during 1994, picked up the award for BBC overseas sports personality.

Zairean witchdoctor blamed for defeat

NAIROBI (AFP) — Zaire's Daring Club Motema Pembe who beat Kenya Breweries 3-0 on Sunday to win the Africa Cup Winners Cup brought a witchdoctor to cast a spell over their opponents, newspapers reported Monday. The Standard newspaper said the Breweries' debacle was orchestrated by the ash-painted, clean-shaven, bare-chested Zairean "jujuman" who had his whole body adorned with his witchcraft paraphernalia.

Yugoslavia, Brazil to meet in soccer match

BELGRADE (AFP) — Yugoslavia, who missed the 1992 European Championships in Sweden following a United Nations sporting ban, face World champions Brazil Dec. 23 for their first away match in two years. They also play Argentina in a friendly four days later, following the lifting of the ban last month.

Former Scotland striker faces drugs probe

LONDON (R) — Scottish football authorities are set to probe newspaper reports that former Celtic and West Ham striker Frank McAvennie took cocaine. McAvennie, 35, who played five times for Scotland, claims to have spent between £50 (\$80) and £70 (\$110) a time on the drug during his playing days with the London Club. McAvennie's alleged confessions in a British Sunday paper come two weeks after Arsenal player Paul Merson admitted being addicted to the drug and spending up to £150 (\$235) a night on cocaine. The Scottish Football Association (SFA) said it will examine the matter.

Maradona to be club director

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Embattled Diego Maradona looks set to be offered a director's job by Argentinian side Racing Club. Maradona's manager Marcos Franchi said on Sunday that Maradona, who has just quit a job as assistant trainer with Deportivo Mendiya after a row with the club president, was "very enthusiastic" about the idea. Racing's president Juna De Stefano said Maradona would be "an excellent candidate" for the post. The former Argentinian skipper, banned until September next year for taking a stimulant during the World Cup, was also in the news on Saturday after a court prosecutor called on him to be jailed for four years. He is accused of firing at and wounding journalists with an air rifle in February.



Bernard Tapie

Tapie steps down as Marseille president

MARSEILLE (R) — Ex-television anchorman Pierre Cangioni Sunday took over from Maverick businessman Bernard Tapie as president of former European soccer champions Marseille.

Tapie, who was banned from running the club by French football authorities following the alleged rigging of a league match against Valenciennes last year, said he would be giving up all his shares in the club by "next week at the latest."

Tapie at present heads the company owning two-thirds of the club.

Cangioni said: "You've had Santa Claus as a president for eight years. It was something unique in the history of French soccer, a president devoting so much of his time and money to his club."

"It is hard to take over from Bernard Tapie. Instead of a messiah, you will now be chaired by a team."

The mission of the new

president will be to take Marseille back to the first division. They were relegated to the second division last season because of the rigging scandal and for bankruptcy.

"We don't have mines and we don't have oil. But we have a lot of ideas," Cangioni said.

Tapie himself said the new club leaders would pour in enough money for Marseille to be a competitive team but maybe not at the highest European level.

"The budget the team will have is enough to qualify for a European Cup competition," he said.

"But we won't be able to make it another Paris St Germain. To do so it would take either a madcap like myself ready to pour in 50 millions francs (\$10 million) or a big structure like (TV network) Canal Plus."

Canal Plus own Paris St Germain, who took over from Marseille as French League champions last season.

Cantona to lead France against Azerbaijan

PARIS (AFP) — Eric Cantona must prove that 50,000 Frenchmen can be wrong when he captains France for what could easily be the last time Tuesday.

If a rowdy French lynchmob have their way, Cantona, English footballer of the year and one of the most gifted players of his generation, may never even play for France again.

Should France thrash Azerbaijan in their European Championship qualifier, it will probably make very little difference to Cantona's prospects.

French Football League and Football Federation officials have already absorbed the lessons from a string of recent disappointments at international level.

Cantona might not figure in their plans for 1995 and the

all-important lead-up to the European Championships in England the following year.

Canto, the hero who scored 21 goals in 43 games for France, has been forgotten. Step forward the arrogant warrior who has played three poor games, one of them strikingly inept, in France's last three outings.

The howl for Cantona's head gained force after each of the last three goalless draws — on September 7 against Slovakia in Bratislava, against Romania in St. Etienne in October 8, and against Poland in Zabre on November 16.

France pin all their hopes on resurgent Jean-Pierre Papin to end the goal drought, which has so far plagued their campaign in the European Soccer Championship qualifying Group One.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HIRSH © 1993 Tanya & Omar Sharif, Inc.

HOW TO HANDLE A MOYSIAN FIT

Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ A K Q 6 5
♥ A 10 3
♦ 6 4
♣ A 8 3
WEST
♠ 9 4
♥ 8 6 2
♦ Q J 10
♣ K 10 4

EAST
♠ 2 10 8 2
♥ 7 4
♦ 9 7 5 3
♣ J 9 7
SOUTH
♠ 7 3
♥ K Q J 5
♦ A K 8 2
♣ Q 5 2

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 NT Pass 3 ♣ Pass
4 ♣ Pass 6 ♣ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠.
An eight-card or better combined holding is considered the ideal for lead to ignore the 4-3 fit, known as the Moysian fit because of Alphonse Moysan, Here's a classic example of a Moysian fit. Only in hearts can a slam be made.

After North jump shifted and then raised hearts, South judged the excellent four-card suit was at least

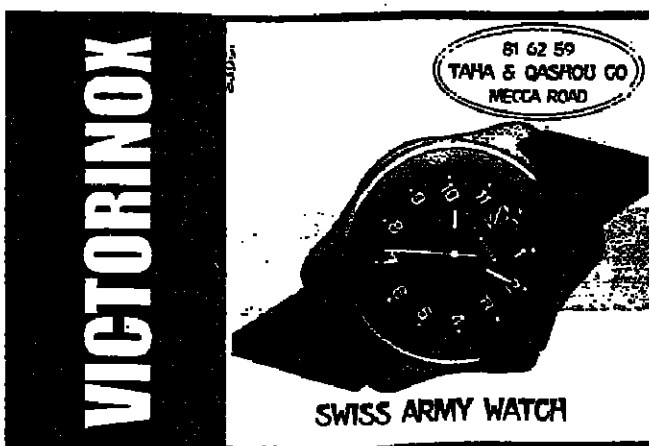
the requisite of a five-bagger. Its cue-bidding four diamonds South showed a better than minimum

hand with diamond control. North needed no further urging to contract for slam.

West led the queen of diamonds and declarer could count 10 fast winners. An 11th trick would come from a diamond ruff and the obvious place to develop the fulfilling trick was in the spade suit. There was a handling problem. Since the probable trump break was 4-1, declarer could not afford to draw trumps before setting up a spade trick.

The solution was quite pretty. Declarer won the opening lead in hand, led a spade and ducked in dummy! That was the defender's first and last trick. East won and was overruled by the king and, after the remaining high diamonds and trumps, Trumps were drawn in suit rounds and the declarer played on spades, making 12 tricks when the suit broke 4-2.

Observe that, as declarer tackled the hand, the slam would go down only if diamonds were 6-1, or if spades were 5-1.



Athletes to watch start of '96 Olympics on TV

ATLANTA (Agencies) — Olympics athletes will start the 1996 Games by watching the opening ceremony on television.

A plan to seat the 10,000 competitors in Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium and march them to the adjacent Olympic Stadium for the traditional parade passed a major hurdle Sunday with final approval from the IOC athletes commission.

Unless objections are raised in the executive board, the International Olympic Committee's final review level, the athletes will watch the start of the ceremonies on Friday night, July 19, 1996, on the giant TV screen in the stadium that has been home of the Atlanta Braves U.S. Major League Baseball club since 1966.

During the ceremonies the teams would leave their seats in the old stadium and march across the street to the main Olympic stadium, now under construction.

Following the traditional parade of athletes, with Greece leading the way and the host United States bringing up the rear, the teams will remain in the main stadium for the rest of the ceremonies.

"We finalized what we basically agreed to in Paris," said Prince Albert of Monaco, vice chairman of the athletes commission. Albert said officials were studying ways of assuring the athletes didn't miss a second of the ceremonies — perhaps even installing television sets along the 400-metre route between the two stadiums so they could monitor the action.

Sunday's meetings began a week of sessions involving the IOC and the Association of National Olympic Committees, the main business will be for the world's almost-200 NOCs to see the venues where the '96 games will take place and review preparations for the 100th birthday of the modern Olympics.

While the athletes always have marched in the opening ceremonies, they often have appeared almost as afterthoughts, kept in staging areas ahead of time and unable to watch the party being thrown in their honour.

At the 1992 Barcelona Games, the athletes were allowed to stay on the stadium infield and watch the end of the ceremonies and a massive fireworks show. They wanted at least the same in Atlanta, and organisers wanted to make sure the athletes could watch the show and still make a grand entrance.

Although the athletes commission just about completed work on opening ceremonies,

it did not touch on the issue of when to run the men's marathon.

Traditionally, the marathon has been the final competition, finishing in the main stadium during the closing ceremonies. That would mean starting the 42.2-kilometre race in the worst of the heat and humidity of a Southeastern American summer afternoon.

Critics, including many runners, contend the timing of the race poses health dangers. They have urged that the race be run in the cool of the morning, as the women's marathon will be.

Officials ready: Flags, anthems

In 1992, Atlanta was embarrassed when its baseball team, the Braves, hosted the Toronto Blue Jays in the World Series and accidentally flew the Canadian flag upside down.

During the 1996 summer Olympic Games, the city doesn't want a repeat.

Changes in the world, especially the birth of new countries as communist regimes collapsed, have complicated things.

That's why the U.S. Army band will play close to 200 country's anthems this week as organisers work to ensure they have the right flag and national anthem for every participating country.

They will tape the songs, which will be played back to representatives attending the Association of National Olympic Committees meeting here this week, each of the 196 country representatives will be asked to verify his country's flag and anthem.

The task is especially complicated in the case of about a dozen countries whose national symbols are missing from U.S. government files. In most cases, the country is so new that it doesn't yet have a flag or anthem. In other cases, the country may not have diplomatic ties with the United States. Those countries have been asked to bring sheet music with them this week.

The last was the Goodwill Games, where a Norwegian won and they raised the Swedish flag and played the Swedish national anthem.

And to make matters even more complex, one country — South Africa may adopt a new flag and anthem before the Games.

IOC leaders tackle Chinese doping riddle

Olympic leaders will try to make sense of China's doping riddle at their meetings in Atlanta this week.

On the one hand their own expert says the positive tests returned by seven Chinese swimmers at the Asian Games offer clear evidence of a systematic doping programme in swimming.

At the same time the International Olympic Committee (IOC) itself apparently buys the official Beijing line that the explosion of Chinese doping should be laid at the door of individual athletes and coaches, rather than the country's sports leaders.

Although doping accusations — particularly in swimming and athletics — have been widespread for several years, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch declared in October that he believed Chinese sport was "very clean."

His words came back to haunt him last month when the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced that a total of 11 Chinese athletes in four sports had tested positive for the anabolic steroid dehydrotestosterone (DHT) at the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October.

An IOC spokesman said recently that Samaranch's "very clean" declaration had been meant as a signal to Chinese Olympic officials that he was confident they would put their house in order.

But the house looked decidedly dishevelled last week when Manfred Donike, a member of the IOC's doping sub-commission and the world's foremost doping expert, said there was no doubt China had been systematically doping its swimmers.

Donike, who runs IOC-approved anti-doping laboratory in Cologne and was involved in analysing the Hiroshima urine samples, said: "From the tests it can be concluded that there is systematic doping with the substance dehydrotestosterone in swimming."

Although the IOC acknowledges the seriousness of the situation, it has been at pains to exonerate the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), which on Thursday banned the seven swimmers for two years.

Larsson upsets Sampras to earn \$1.5m

MUNICH (R) — Magnus Larsson capped the biggest week of his career by powering past world No. 1 Pete Sampras to take the richest first prize in tennis at the \$6 million Grand Slam Cup Sunday.

Larsson, who had helped Sweden win the Davis Cup final a week earlier, demolished a tiring Sampras with his relentless serving power to win 7-6 4-6 7-6 6-4 in two hours and 38 minutes.

The victory earned the modest Swede, ranked 19 in the world, a winner's cheque \$1.5 million and practically doubled his career earnings.

Larsson, who conquered compatriot Stefan Edberg and Americans Andre Agassi and Todd Martin on the way to the final, said the Davis Cup win over Russia had given him the confidence he needed.

"I'd dreamed of that all my life. When that came true I

\$250,000 bonus for each of the two Grand Slam events he has won this year.

The tall American looked sluggish from the outset and said he had not recovered from a gruelling 3½ hour semifinal against Goran Ivanisevic less than 24 hours earlier.

"It's tough on the body, it's tough on the mind and it just took its toll today," he said. But he also paid tribute to Larsson: "He's very underrated and someone who'll be a force next year."

Confronted after the game with the problem of spending \$1.5 million, Larsson had his emotions well under control.

"If I want to it's no problem," he said. "It's a lot of money but money isn't everything in the world."

"When I was younger I went to the casino a lot but now I don't gamble that much. Maybe tonight."

Leading 1994 prize money winners issued by the ATP Tour

Monday:	
1. Pete Sampras (U.S.)	\$3,697,812
2. Sergi Bruguera (Spain)	\$3,031,874
3. Stefan Edberg (Sweden)	\$2,489,161
4. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)	\$2,060,278
5. Michael Stich (Germany)	\$2,033,623
6. Boris Becker (Germany)	\$2,029,756
7. Andre Agassi (U.S.)	\$1,941,667
8. Jim Courier (U.S.)	\$1,921,584
9. Michael Chang (U.S.)	\$1,789,495
10. Andrei Medvedev (Ukraine)	\$1,211,134
11. Wayne Ferreira (South Africa)	\$1,063,341
12. Jacco Eltingh (Netherlands)	\$1,053,619
13. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia)	\$1,011,563
14. Alberto Berasategui (Spain)	\$939,651
15. Paul Haarhuis (Netherlands)	\$930,961
16. Todd Martin (U.S.)	\$888,342
17. Mark Woodforde (Australia)	\$885,924
18. Marc Rosset (Switzerland)	\$768,004
19. Jonas Bjorkman (Sweden)	\$756,552
20. Jonathan Stark (U.S.)	\$689,379



World No. 1 Pete Sampras

Steps down as president

President Albert of Monaco... (The text is mostly illegible due to heavy noise and artifacts in the scan.)

to lead France

zerbaijan... (The text is mostly illegible due to heavy noise and artifacts in the scan.)

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Shows:	12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	CHILDREN'S PLAY Water Is A Blessing From Heaven Time 10:00 a.m.	Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Daily at 8:30 Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday. in English Sundays December 11, 18, only.
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Russians, Chechens clash as they open peace talks

GROZNY (AFP) — Russian troops, backed by helicopter gunships and planes, fought with Chechen forces Monday, as the two sides started last-ditch talks aimed at averting a full-scale assault on the breakaway republic's capital Grozny.

The talks in Vladikavkaz, the capital of neighbouring North Ossetia, got under way as thousands of Russian troops and hundreds of tanks and armoured cars awaited orders to seize Grozny from nearby positions.

The clash, about 25 kilometres (15 miles) north-west of Grozny, was the first direct confrontation between the Russians and the secessionist Chechens.

Chechen soldiers loyal to President Dzhokhar Dudayev fired a surface-to-surface missile at a column of Russian armoured vehicles sent to impose order on the separatist republic, a photographer on the spot said.

The Russian tanks opened fire in return. They were backed up by helicopters firing rockets and by four war planes, the witness said.

A spokesman for the government of the breakaway Russian republic confirmed that there had been fighting. Explosions could be heard from Grozny.

"The Russian army attacked Chechen government forces and fighting is taking place," spokesman Movladi Udogov said, without giving further details.

Interfax news agency said two Russians were killed and several wounded.

Thousands of Russian troops and hundreds of armoured vehicles poured into the Caucasus republic Sunday to clamp down on a three-year bid by Dudayev to win independence from Russia.

Grozny was virtually encircled Monday, but Russian authorities at the military base in Mozdok said foggy weather was hampering any possible attack. ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Yeltsin spokesman Viacheslav Kostikov as saying there were no plans to storm the capital.

The Russian delegation to the talks was led by Deputy Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov and the Chechens by Economy Minister Taimaz Abubakarov, the Russian press centre on Chechnya said in Moscow.

There was no indication of what was being discussed at the talks, which Russian President Boris Yeltsin said Sunday he hoped would secure a "political solution" to the crisis.

On Sunday, two civilians were killed and eight wounded in a clash between Russian troops and locals on the border between Dagestan and Chechnya, Russian and Chechen sources said.

Around 50 Russian soldiers had been taken prisoner following the clash, the sources said.

In Grozny, official sources said that between 47 and 58 Russian soldiers had been taken prisoner after Russians opened fire on locals attempting to prevent them from entering Chechnya from Dagestan.

The prisoners were to be presented to the press later Monday in Grozny, the Chechen sources said.

In Moscow, the Russian government's information centre said 48 Russian troops had been captured, including eight officers.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov has called on the Dagestan authorities to see that the prisoners were freed.

Clashes between Russians and unknown assailants in Ingushetia republic left between three and five people dead Sunday as Russian troops moved into neighbouring Chechnya.

In Moscow, the parliament said it will hold a plenary session Tuesday to discuss a "political" settlement in Chechnya.

"Political methods have not been exhausted and the Duma (the lower parliamentary chamber) has decided to meet Tuesday" to discuss them, said Mikhail Mityukov, one of the Duma vice-presidents after meeting representatives of political parties.

Five thousands people demonstrated against the intervention.

Chechnya, located in the Caucasus mountains of southern Russia, declared independence in 1991. Russia has refused to recognise the claim and has backed Chechen forces opposed to Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general.

A mostly Muslim nation of 1.2 million people, Chechnya has a traditional warrior culture and an abiding hatred of Russia.

The crisis in Chechnya has been building for months, and on Friday, Yeltsin gave the go-ahead to use force.

The two political parties closest to Mr. Yeltsin began discussing possible impeachment proceedings against him in the state Duma. It was not clear if such an action would be legally possible.

At a peace rally before the meeting, lawmaker Sergei Yushenkov said Mr. Yeltsin should be impeached for "inflaming" ethnic conflict. "I see no other way of stopping the president," he said.



REGENT VISITS AIR FORCE UNITS: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday made an inspection tour of military positions and a number of Jordanian Royal Air Force units. Accompanied by senior officers, the Prince first visited the Prince Faisal Technical

College and was briefed on its services. He later visited the Air Force transport squadron and the Air Force general headquarters. The Regent visited a number of Air Force bases and inspected workshops for the maintenance of aircraft.

PNA refuses to extradite settler killers

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority is refusing to hand over to Israel two cousins who murdered a Jewish settler and now work in the Gaza intelligence service, one of the cousins told AFP Monday.

"The authority told me the Israelis are putting on a lot of pressure to extradite us," Rajah Abu Sita told AFP. "The Israelis have threatened to enter Gaza to capture us."

"But I am sure the authority will not listen to the Israelis. The authority will take care of us," he said in an interview.

Mr. Rajah and his cousin Amr Abu Sita shot dead settler Uri Megidish March 8, 1993, in a greenhouse at the settlement of Gan Or.

Both were members of the Hawks, armed wing of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's mainstream PLO movement Fatah.

Israel demanded their extradition last Sept. 29 under the autonomy agreement which calls for the Palestinian authority to hand over Palestinian suspects.

Some Palestinian officials argue that the agreement does not cover offences committed before the signing of the self-rule deal in September 1993.

"I can turn myself in to the Israelis, but on condition that they give me the names of all the Israeli undercover soldiers who have killed Palestinians since the autonomy agreement."

"They should all be handed over to the authority in Gaza," 22-year-old Rajah said.

He listed about a dozen Palestinians murdered by Israel.

However the autonomy accord does not oblige Israel to hand over Israeli suspects to the Palestinians.

Rajah, from Khan Younes, alleged that Israeli agents have already tried to kill him on numerous occasions and searched his family home just two weeks ago, even though it is in the autonomous area.

Israel has so far submitted three formal requests for suspects to be handed over under the autonomy deal.

Assailants kill Palestinian woman

In Jericho also Monday, masked assailants in the Palestinian self-rule area of Jericho shot and killed a newlywed woman and injured her husband in what appeared to be a revenge shooting, Palestinian police said.

Three masked men broke into the apartment of Ibrahim Amr before dawn and opened fire on the sleeping couple, who were married just last week.

Rasmiya, 20, was killed in the shooting, and her husband Ibrahim, 25, was lightly injured and taken to a Jericho hospital. Mr. Amr is serving out the remainder of a life-sentence prison term in the PLO-run Jericho area after he was released from an Israeli prison in July as part of the self-rule agreement.

Mr. Amr was convicted by the Israelis of killing a Palestinian he believed had collaborated with the Israeli authorities in the West Bank village of Dura just south of Hebron.

Hamas ready for elections

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas is ready to take part in town hall elections and is negotiating with the Palestinian National Authority for an early ballot, a senior Islamist said Monday.

"We asked to have municipal elections as soon as possible," Hamas leader Imad Faluji told AFP.

He estimated that Hamas, which is fighting on against Israeli occupation, would win at least 40 per cent of the vote.

But Mr. Faluji stressed that the movement would not participate in elections to an autonomy council unless it was totally independent from Israel and had real legislative power, including the power to scrap the 1993 self-rule agreement.

"We welcome the authority ... and we are ready to work together in daily life," he said. "But there are big differences between municipal elections and autonomy elections."

Faluji said he took part in negotiations Saturday with the Palestinian local government minister Saeb Erakat.

"The negotiations are difficult, but they will continue and we hope we will be able to provide a service for our people," Mr. Faluji said.

The mainstream PLO group Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Islamic Jihad also attended the talks.

However Mr. Erakat told AFP the meetings were intended to set up temporary councils in Gaza to prepare for elections, as had already been done in the self-rule enclave of Jericho.

"All factions are involved whether or not they support the peace process. This is about public service and not about political issues," Mr. Erakat said.

"We hope in the next few days that our meetings in Gaza will lead to the appointment of a 16-member council for the Strip."

It would take over from "independent" councillors appointed by Mr. Arafat several months ago.

Israel and the Palestinians are due to resume talks Wednesday in Cairo on a military redeployment on the West Bank to allow for elections to an autonomy council.

Municipal elections would take place separately after autonomy elections, Mr. Erakat said.

In Gaza the last municipal elections were held in 1945 under the British mandate and in 1976 on the West Bank.

Turk prosecutor to appeal for Kurd MPs execution

ANKARA (R) — A top Turkish prosecutor said jail sentences of up to 15 years given to eight Kurdish members of parliament were too lenient and vowed to appeal for their executions.

"The decision we wanted did not come out of the court," said Nusret Demiral, chief prosecutor at Ankara's state security court, where the MPs were tried on capital charges of treason.

After a last-minute change of charges, seven MPs from the now-banned pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) and one independent, were charged and jailed for separatism.

"We had made our evaluation on these (MPs) in the indictment. We believe their actions were covered by article 125," Mr. Demiral was on Monday quoted by Anatolian News Agency as saying.

"In line with these beliefs, we will appeal."

Mr. Demiral was not available for comment, but he was quoted along the same lines in newspapers last week.

Article 125 carries the death sentence for treason. The MPs were accused of acting politically for the banned separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

The charge against the MPs was changed at the hearing Thursday which eventually imposed the jail sentences, and they were accused of forming or involvement with armed gangs.

Their sentences provoked expressions of concern from the West and calls for swifter democratisation in Turkey.

A draft bill designed by the ruling coalition's Social Democrat partners to lift curbs on freedom of expression is still before parliament due to opposition from rightists, Islamists and members of Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's own True Path Party.

Earlier Monday, Fikri Saglar, second-in-command in the Socialist Democrat Party (SDP) resigned, saying he quit because the so-called democratisation package had made too little progress in parliament.

SDP's former Foreign Minister Muntaz Soysal create a rumour in parliament before his Nov. 28 resignation by holding up key privatisation legislation with his insistence that the democratisation package go through at the same time.

The initial work on the democratisation package involves a revision of the anti-terror law, under which the MPs and several writers and intellectuals have been convicted.

'Have you come to kill us?,' Chechens ask Russian 'invader'

CHERVLENNAYA, Russia (AFP) — The Russian major, leaning against an army truck with a machinegun strapped across his back, drew on his cigarette as he watched his troops install a guard post outside this north Chechen village.

Part of the intervention force that poured into Chechnya Sunday with orders from Moscow to end this renegade Russian republic's three-year secession bid, he gave his name as Sergei.

Choosing his words carefully, he told an AFP reporter that he and his men — "perhaps 500 or 600 in all" —

reached this village around 30 kilometres north of the Chechen capital Grozny Sunday morning via the neighbouring Russian republic of Dagestan.

Suddenly, he stepped back and readjusted his shoulder strap. Seconds later he was surrounded by a reception committee of around a dozen irate Chechens from the nearby village.

"Do you want to repeat here the massacres that have taken place in Georgia, Armenia, and elsewhere in the Caucasus?" one of them asked by way of introduction.

"That depends as much on you as on me," Sergei replied.

A member of the group, who gave his name as Danilbek Ochayev, added: "Do you have children?" Sergei answered yes.

"The other day when Russian planes dropped bombs near here, my son led his little brother into the cellar and told him: 'Lie flat on your stomach!'" Danilbek continued.

"What would you say if we did that to your children?"

Tensions rose as Sergei declined to answer.

Boys, buses, fears, flags

By Abdullah Hassanat

The Bedouin Palestinian boy tending his camels and sheep from the back of his donkey on the western bank of the River Jordan was not aware of the 20 odd journalists in a blue bus heading for Tel Aviv to attend an historic event.

Nor was the Israeli Hasidic boy with his shaved head, yarmulke and sideburns waiting at a traffic light looking at the Arab faces in the yellow Israeli tourist bus. While the journalists stared in apprehension at what was happening around them, and easily noticed the contrast between what Arab and Jewish boys did, their minds were preoccupied with thinking about what lay ahead. Some of them no doubt were still trying to reconcile themselves to the fact that Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa are not theirs any more and that the opening of the Jordanian embassy in Tel Aviv on Dec. 11 was another step towards acknowledging the new reality.

Standing on the terrace of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, overlooking Jerusalem, they wondered about the past, present and future of this city, this land and the region as a whole.

"Look at their faces," one woman journalist said to another as their colleagues climbed back into the bus after a brief photo-taking session.

Yes, some of the faces reflected unease, but some had no impression and one at least was smiling almost uncontrollably.

Their minds were also occupied by more mundane and down-to-earth matters. Children's school fees, competition at work, bank credits, spouses, and so on. And that was reflected by heavy smoking on the bus, which was all right as far as the Jordanians were concerned but not so with the Israelis.

Smoking was not allowed on the Israeli bus which carried a sign "EC regulation No. 66," and the Israeli driver of Moroccan origin had to remind the journalists that smoking was prohibited since this was a "tourist bus." In the absence of ashtrays the tiles "made of PVC" might catch fire. But the chain-smoking, nervous journalists were not deterred. They constructed their own ashtrays and passed them around. The people of the press had all the reasons to be nervous: the 200 odd kilometres from Amman to Tel Aviv took six hours to cover. On the Jordanian side, where prior coordination seemed to have been missing, the Jordanian officials were very cordial, yet the formalities took an hour to complete.

The Israelis, though cordial as their Jordanian counterparts, were more formal. They demanded passports that the journalists did not carry. It took another hour to call the Israeli foreign office in Jerusalem to get the clearance. (The journey back took less than four hours).

One more element that added to the nervousness was the traffic lights and traffic jams on the Israeli side. Although it was not rush hour, the journalists were told, the 130-kilometre journey from the Israeli border checkpoint to Tel Aviv took almost three hours to complete. Israeli traffic lights must be spaced at 100 metres intervals since Israeli drivers are as impatient as their Arab colleagues.

The aftermath of accidents, old and fresh, could be seen everywhere. But worst of all, Israeli drivers toot and swear, which makes you feel at home.

And that is what they did in front of the beach-side Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv, home of the Jordanian embassy, where traffic moves at a snail's pace.

The journalists were starving by now, so they were whisked off to room 260 for turkey sandwiches and coffee. (Later, on the way back, the journalists indulged in falafel sandwiches at a Palestinian kiosk in the outskirts of Jerusalem).

Back at the Dan Hotel, Omar Rifai, head of the Jordanian delegation, from the Foreign Ministry took the journalists to the small hall where the ceremony, to be attended by foreign diplomats, was to be held. He said he would stand on the podium, in front of King Hussein's portrait on the wall behind him, make the announcement and then unveil the flag, until that moment roped in a white cloth on his side.

And that is what Mr. Rifai did exactly at the ceremony's appointed hour, 1600 hours Tel Aviv time. The thing that was not very clear though was whether the diplomats from Egypt, the United States, Russia and the European Community showed up, since Mr. Rifai was literally hidden from view by Israeli and international journalists and video cameras.

But judging from the number of smart looking people attending the ceremony, the diplomats must have been there.

Mr. Rifai then led the crowd out to the main entrance of the Dan Hotel for the flag-raising ceremony. And while the Jordanian flag glided up on the mast, cameras videotaped the historical moment for children — Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli — to see and think about in the future.

COLUMN

Single winner claims over \$27 lottery jackpot

LONDON (AP) — One man or woman became fabulously wealthy this weekend, and Britons are dying to know who. There was a single winner of the £17.8 million (\$27.8 million) lottery jackpot, said a statement Sunday from Camelot, which organises Britain's National Lottery. The statement said that "initial checks suggest" the winner of the Saturday night draw is not a syndicate, but an individual. The figure was high because no one had won the previous week's lottery jackpot. Camelot spokesman Paul Rigg later told Sky Television News that someone had contacted the lottery, saying he or she had the ticket. Mr. Rigg would not identify the person, other to say that he or she was British. The ticket would be checked Monday. The win is the largest in the short history of Britain's National Lottery, which was launched only last month. The world record lottery win is believed to be to a Wisconsin teacher in August 1993, who won \$11 million on the Powerball Lottery.

French deputies reject compulsory AIDS testing

PARIS (R) — The National Assembly Sunday rejected a plan to conduct systematic testing of the French population for AIDS. The proposal had been added by the Senate to a package of miscellaneous social reforms, which now returns to the Senate for final consideration. The Assembly rejected it after Health Minister Simone Veil told deputies that AIDS testing was already required for anyone seeking to donate blood, sperm, organs or mother's milk. Experts are divided on whether the benefits of compulsory testing outweigh its drawbacks. In most of the world, voluntary testing is the rule. Public health officials say requiring widespread testing would help track and contain the infection's spread, but civil libertarians say it would violate privacy rights and expose those found to be infected to discrimination.

Sri Lankan police bust baby racket

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan police have launched a search for a doctor who allegedly organised a racket for the sale of children of unwed mothers for adoption, a police spokesman here said Monday. Police raided a clinic operated by the doctor at Colombo's Slave Island and took into protective custody two mothers and their two-week-old babies over the weekend, the spokesman said. "We are looking for the doctor to help us with the investigation," Inspector W. Diwelgama said. But the inspector also discounted local press reports that the infants were being sold at the clinic to remove their organs for transplant. Commissioner of Probation and Childcare Padma Ranasinghe said she was awaiting the outcome of the police investigation, and added there had been no evidence of organ removal from the children. In Sri Lanka, children can be legally adopted only through the courts on the recommendation of the Department of Probation and Childcare.

No battery Turkeys please — Dublin mayor

DUBLIN (R) — Dublin's bicycle-riding vegetarian "green" mayor has told Irish farmers to give poor people free-range turkeys for Christmas instead of intensively-farmed ones. John Gormley said Monday he had asked the Irish Farmers Association to make the switch in its annual donation of Christmas birds to the city for Dublin's poor. "We ended up with a compromise. I agreed to accept free-range birds, even though I am vegetarian. I took them because I am mayor of all the people of Dublin," said Mr. Gormley, the city's first green mayor. Mr. Gormley has caused a stir by preferring a bicycle to the traditional mayoral limousine for getting around the city, and by publicly stating his aversion to meat.